

792-0999 THE 1

ralia's magazine of the performing arts. February 1980 \$1.95*

Theatre Australia

Interview: Noni Hazlehurst

Theatre & Feminism

Special Report:

Soviet Theatre



**SPECIAL
TV
FEATURE**



**FESTIVAL
OF PERTH**



at the 1980 Festival of Perth 22 February - 15 March

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra (Poland)
11, 13, 14 March

The Netherlands Wind Ensemble (Holland)
26, 28, 29 February

The Flies of London (U.K.)
6 March

Cathy Berberian (U.S.A.)
8 March

Arcsensy Piano Trio (Aust.)
24 February and 2 March

Jane Manning (U.K.)
9 March

Stan Gata Quintet (U.S.A.)
Tanta Maria Trio (Brazil)
27 and 28 February

Charlie Byrd Trio (U.S.A.)
4 March

National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Great Britain (U.K.)
10 March

Sky at Night (U.K.)
15 March

Bob Fox and Stu Luckley (U.K.)
1, 2, 6 March

'Northern Drift'
Henry Livings and Alex Glasgow (U.K.)
23 February - 15 March

Jasper Carrott (U.K.)
25 February

'Footfire'
Bob Berkly (U.S.A.)
5 - 15 March

Spike Milligan (U.K.)
27 February - 15 March

'Take Me To Your Lieder'
Richard Stilgoe (U.K.)
23 February - 4 March

Glöckl May (W. Germany)
3 and 5 March

'Elizabeth I'
The Acting Company of New York (U.S.A.)
26 February - 5 March

'Privates on Parade'
National Theatre Co starring Tim Brooke-Taylor
22 February - 15 March

'The Case of Katherine Mansfield'
Hearshoch and Sorensen Theatre Company (N.Z.)
5 - 15 March

'That's the Way to Do It'
Chris Harris (U.K.)
6 - 15 March

'Roses in Due Season'
Hole in the Wall Company
27 February - 15 March

'A Man of Many Parts'
One-man play starring Neville Trade
28 and 29 February, 1, 5 - 8, 12 - 15 March

'Cop Out'
Western Australian Theatre Company
28 February - 15 March

Treasures of London Exhibition
14 February - 6 March

An International Film Festival
14 January - 16 March

Special Children's Festival
10 - 15 March

There's a wealth of entertainment waiting for you
at the 1980 Festival of Perth

Obtain your free copy of the Festival brochure
by telephoning (09) 386 7977

Festival Poster - created by
the great Sir Russell Drysdale
- is on sale for \$4 (add \$1
for postage).

Festival of Perth
University of Western Australia
Nedlands, W.A. 6009



Theatre Australia

FEBRUARY 1980, VOLUME 4, NO. 7.

DEPARTMENTS

3/COMMENT

4/INTO

8/LETTERS

9/WISPS, RUMOURS AND FACTS/*Raymond Stanley, Norman Kessel*

36/THEATREGUIDE (THEATRE, DANCE, OPERA, CONCERTS)

SPOTLIGHT

11/NOI HAZLEHURST/*Tony Sheldon*

13/MALCOLM BLAYLOCKE AT LA BOITE/*Richard Fotheringham*

FEATURES

16/PERTH FESTIVAL/*David Monkman*

19/SPECIAL TV FEATURE/*Michael Roberts*

21/THEATRE AND FEMINISM: FROM THEN TILL NOW/*Suzanne Spenser*

INTERNATIONAL

42/UK: MENOPAUSAL FARCES/*Irving Wardle*

44/USA: IMPORTED VERSUS DOMESTIC/*Karl Levent*

45/USSR: SPECIAL REPORT/*Kyle Wilson*

47/ITH: NEWS OF CONGRESSES

DANCE

48/ANNA KARENINA/*William Shoulbridge*

OPERA

50/AMALGAM OF EXCELLENCE AND AMATEUR/*David Gyger*

BOOKS

55/THE NEW BARBARISM/*John McCulloch*

THEATRE REVIEWS

31/ACT/ONCE A CATHOLIC, SHERLOCK HOLMES/*Kyle Wilson*

32/NSW/SUNNY SOUTH/*Barry O'Connor*

33/KNUCKLE/*Tony Barclay*

34/PIRATES AT THE BAR/*Norman Kessel*

35/NT/SCAPING/*Alan Youngson*

36/SA/AUSTRALIAN DRAMA FESTIVAL/*Susan Yik, Harold Minor*

39/TAS/GIMME SHELTER/*Ken Keha*

40/VC/CINDERELLA/*Raymond Stanley*

41/END TO END, COUNTERSPACES/*Catherine Peake*

A PREVIEW OF SOME 1980* SHOWS!

Presented by
THE AUSTRALIAN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE TRUST



February/March 1980



February/March 1980



June 1980



August - December 1980



June 1980



July/August 1980

GET THE BEST SEATS - at a concession price for these shows and many more besides

If you haven't ever thought about joining the A.E.T.T., now is the time to do so. The A.E.T.T. offers theatre and transport a remarkable service for just \$15 per year.

THEATRE CONCESSIONS. Discounts are available for most theatres on a regular basis. You can save up to \$10 on a double ticket.

FILM CONCESSIONS: You can save \$2.00 on a double ticket at a wide range of films.

TRUST NEWS: Our regular newsletter brings you news of forthcoming attractions and of special Member concessions.

EASY BOOKING: With each Trust News you receive booking coupons which allow you to book for the major attractions announced in that edition directly from

A.E.T.T. - The Theatre Trust
making it all happen in Australia!

home. You send your booking coupon back to the Trust and we see you get the best seats available.

PREFERENTIAL BOOKING FACILITIES: Members usually read about forthcoming attractions in Trust News before they are advertised in the press. So Members can book before the general public and receive prime seats.

Quite a service we think you'll agree so don't delay - ring your State Trust office for an application form NOW!

- SYDNEY: Carole Long. Phone: (02) 357 1200
- MELBOURNE: Mardi Stewart. Phone: (03) 662 2911
- BRISBANE: Jenn Dixon. Phone: (07) 221 9528
- ADELAIDE: Veronica Scott. Phone: (08) 232 0085
- PERTH: Toby Mansford. Phone: (082) 384 7317

* MORE SHOWS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

COMMENT

The Perth Festival is a major event, the more so to be applauded for being annual, having run for several decades and being restricted to so isolated a venue. For whatever David Kleinknecht may say (or his amici), Perth is not simply analogous to the smaller cities of Europe, eg Edinburgh, where festivals seem to work more so than in the capital. The difference is ascertainable.

Edinburgh is, after all, not so long a train ride from London — probably less than an hour by air — and Salzburg is again a focal point in a peninsula containing some hundreds of millions of people.

Perth's situation is merely a microcosm of the general problem of being in Australia. Internally, of course, we suffer not just from a minuscule population from which to draw the standard 2% who are culturally inclined, but the dispersion of that market over a vast land mass. And externally, where London theatre and even the Edinburgh Festival — is patronised by a large percentage of tourists, this country will have to wait for a like type or like structure (which with DFRC good looks increasingly cheap) before overseas visitors become even a pinprick on ticket sales charts.

It is remarkable, then, that festivals are successful to any degree. That they are has come to depend on substantial funding from the private sector — keen to be associated with the cultural bonanza served up in an atmosphere of city night celebrations. The other ingredient is of course the audience. 'Naturally' festivals are mounted in the vacation period, with the event both drawing on and itself forming the substance of the holiday mood.

Yet finally, what makes such events work and what makes them utterly irresponsible is the quality of the artists who can be engaged to appear. Festivals give the impetus for local companies to give of their very best, an interchange of talent between the states, and for the workers from overseas to come to this, the wonders of the global village. Isolation on both a national and international level makes a cultural investigation or at least become routine; input from interstate or other countries provides yardsticks by which local achievement can be measured and new stimuli given for the future.

Nationally our artists develop by exposure to new techniques and styles by being put on the same platform with the best the world has to offer.

All of this lays an enormous responsibility on the doors of the festival

directors to ensure the highest quality of their selections. Big and large they do their jobs well, with for instance this year Peter Brook's Centre for International Theatre Creation coming to Adelaide, the controversial Acting Company at New York appearing both there and in Perth, and the Warsaw Philharmonic again performing at both.

And critics and showbusiness reviewers if the festival provides the usual venue additional exposure and benefit for more of the country, can then be gained from touring their attractions elsewhere. With directors working more on concert the development of civic theatre touring circuits and the new coming together of suburban theatre companies (ADAF) see that this sort of movement at both local and overseas artists should increase. The crucial factor here — and it seems too obvious to mention — is in seeing the artists at first hand, the viewing of international performances in their original state rather than reproduction in a formula.

More and more the suburban and audience which festivals can virtually guarantee, are turning their directors into generating material from scratch. So Robyn Archer's *Sadness Alley* on the one hand and Stoppard's *Plum Good Boy* directed by Fowler on the other, are being produced in Adelaide.

Reproaching reviews, moreover, has been a modern appendix of the commercial theatre for some time, but it is becoming an increasingly risky business with the failure of *Deathtrap* and *Twelfth Night* and two. The locally repackaged *West End or Broadway* is no longer a certainty and is a very expensive way of finding. Few and others are coming up without the protection of locally made first-hand audiences and private sector subsidy. More prospects for this probable million dollar production next month.



Theatre Australia

Editor	Helen Page
Executive Editor	Emily Wagner
Publishing Consultant	Philip Mason
Art Director	Jack Juppington

ADVISORY BOARD

John Bell, Ian Blair, Michael Bell, John Cullen, Katherine Braham, Vivian Cullen, Michael Corder, W A English, Jack Hibbard, Ken Hester, Garry Hinchman, John Korda, Phil Noyce, Robert O'Brien, Philip Parsons, Geoff Sharpe, Ken Scott, Raymond Smith, Judith Sussman, Mark Trenchard, John Tynan, Tom Trench, Gail Wicks, Richard Whelan.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Sale Advertising Representatives:
The Globe-Briggs Company
114 Raine Street, Waverley NSW 2024
Book Keeping (Manager):
Lynette (02) 32 1248

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

N.S.W. (02) 67 4470
Vic. (03) 599 0914 (03) 24 20
Qld. (07) 244 5038
W. Aust. (08) 299 6079
S.A. — See Ad (08) 32 2531

Theatre Australia gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Honorary Board of the Australia Council, the Literature Board of the Australia Council, the New South Wales Cultural Grants Advisory Council, the Arts Grants Advisory Council, of South Australia the Queensland Cultural Activities Department, the Victorian Ministry of the Arts, the Western Australian Arts Council and the assistance of the University of Newcastle.

MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be forwarded to the editorial office, 80 Elizabeth Street, Macquarie NSW 2104. Telephone (02) 67 4470.

What must not be taken as manuscripts and visual material supplied for this magazine, the publisher and their agents accept no liability for loss of damage which may occur. Unpublished manuscripts and visual material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription rate is \$10.00 per year within Australia. Cheques should be made payable to Theatre Australia and posted to Theatre Publications Ltd, 80 Elizabeth Street, Macquarie NSW 2104.

For postal cost and overseas subscription rates see page 61.

Theatre Australia is published by Theatre Publications Ltd, 80 Elizabeth Street, Macquarie NSW 2104. Telephone (02) 67 4470. Distributed by subscription and through newsagents by Theatre Publications Ltd and to newspapers throughout Australia by Allen & Unwin Pty.

Theatre Australia is printed by 'Soundprint Publications Pty Ltd (City phone 02) 244 0000' at Theatre Publications Ltd. Typesetting is by 'Set Typesetting Pty Ltd (02) 244 5038' in Perth. The magazine is printed by ADPA Printers, Adelaide. (08) 299 6079. All rights reserved except where specified. The cover price is an estimate recommended retail price only. Expenses of the postage are included in magazine B.

I N F O

Queensland Musicals. Both professional companies in Brisbane are due to start off their seasons with big musicals of very different types, but both with commercial appeal within their own policies.

The QTC has *Gipsy* opening on March 7, which will star June Safter in the first stage role she has agreed to undertake since her great success as Queen Mary in *Crooks Marvellous*. The TN Company is

countering with Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* from 22 February, hoping to appeal to "music fans and playgoers" with the "Mack the Knife Show".

Following these the seasons move in very different directions. As the large SGIO Theatre audiences will be seeing *Plagues of the Western World, Richard III*, played by John Krummel, *Traveling North* with Ron Graham and Joan Bruce, *Woman on Veranda Floor*, a 'yet to be

announced' follow up to *Dearheart* Show's *Canada* (hopefully with a famous and internationally acclaimed actress) and finally Michael Rodden's melodrama *Crucial As Deceit* last seen at Sydney's Music Hall.

At Twelfth Night on the other hand comes 46s or the *Autumn Trail*. Ian Watson's version of *Charlwood Orange*, Rob George's *East Flow* in "wonderfully bad taste", *Summer Conference*, *Har-*

ing for Goshu and John Korman's white vs. aboriginal play, *Muskrat*.

Don Jahn



Berlin Komische Oper Ballet in Swan Lake

Berlin Komische Oper. Achievements in opera and dance at the Berlin Komische Oper have become legendary over the past thirty years. Seemingly limitless supplies of time and money, have

poised into the company since its foundation in 1947 in order to achieve a perfection of ensemble performance, of visual and technical effects and great depth of artistic integrity and inspiration. The awe is

which the Oper is held has been compounded over the years by the consistent refusal of both opera and dance companies resident there to perform outside their own home.

The Komische Oper was

founded in 1947 by Walter Felsenstein, one of the greatest stage directors of the 20th Century, and the Komische Oper Ballet was established in 1955. It was set up under the artistic direction of choreographer Tom Schilling, but like everything else at the theatre, came under the perfectionist dictate of Felsenstein, that dance, like opera, must be good theatre, dramatically and visually convincing in every detail.

There will be two programmes shown during the Australian tour, one, the complete *Swan Lake*, the other a programme of four complete one-act ballets featuring John Cranko's *Jour de Carree* together with three Tom Schilling ballets, *Yorck Souphern* (Mozart), *Evening Dances* (Schubert) and *La Mer* (Debussy).

The tour involves an investment of \$2 million the entire 40 dancers are coming to be accompanied by Australian orchestras of at least 32 musicians. They start in Melbourne on March 18, and will go on to Adelaide, Canberra and Sydney.



Peter Allen

Up In One is the name of singer Peter Allen's cabaret show that is currently playing at Her Majesty's in Melbourne, and will be in Sydney from February 13.

We haven't seen Allen since 1977 when he toured the country in response to the phenomenal local success of his song "I Go To Rio". *Up In One* has been a smash hit on Broadway, winning accolades from the most hardened critics for "cabaret at its finest". The Art Deco set alternately hides and discloses a madcap group of musicians, sequins and mirrored costumes, special effects, keep surprising and the changing backdrop scenery alone is worth the price of

admission. Allen's partner is Lenora Niemela, who in the course of a busy career once starred in for Liza Minnelli.

Peter Allen started off in Tennerfield in the late 50's and still has vivid memories of that time. "When a rock show passed through it was like a circus coming, my parents had to lock me in my room to make sure that I didn't run away with them. I just sat in my room and cried and tried to tear the door down. I could sing before I could walk, and when I was nine my mother used to take me to pubs on Sunday afternoons. The men would drink in the bar and I'd play piano in the lounge while the ladies sang all the old songs."

encouraging theatrical activity within the community.

"Broaden the actors' and director's awareness of the place of live theatre in the community by testing audience reactions to a range of theatrical styles and conventions.

"Develop fresh theatrical forms and skills with which to assert the vital presence of live theatre in a society which, on one hand, has

Hoopla are leaping into the new decade with a new subscription campaign and an obvious determination to remain in the public eye. "Hoopla has clearly demonstrated the consistent artistic quality of its work in 1978," said Chairman Lloyd O'Neil. "We produced some of the best theatre in Australia. Now we have a new season to boast about and we're going to make sure everyone knows it. We offer energy, experience and entertainment. We've got the combination."

Their first play of the year is Ted Nelson's *Quadriphemia*, to be directed at the Playbox by Charles (Bud) Tingwell, and apparently, a witty, sparkling comedy

about contemporary relationships." Other Australian Plays scheduled are *Assaults Majestic* by Roger Puhers, about the clash of cultures when a large hotel is transformed into a hospital during the Pacific War, David Allen's *Upside Down at the Bottom of the World* and Clem Gorman's *A Manual of French Warfare*.

Roger Puhers has been appointed Writer in Residence Dramatist with Hoopla for 1980. As well as working on new plays, he will work with other writers in script development and be involved in all aspects of Hoopla's artistic planning. Puhers will be directing *A Manual of French Warfare* for the Playbox Upstairs.



Roger Puhers

Modern Comedy. The third limited scale scheme (the other two being Rex Cramphorn's company and Terry O'Connell's Music Box) is taking place in Melbourne under the direction of Charles Kemp. With him the four permanent actors plan to:

"Promote live theatre among new audiences by presenting accessible and portable productions and

culturally disintegrated (pluralism), and, on the other, is increasingly dominated by rationalism and technological uniformity."

To do this the company will prepare a programme of plays called *A History Of Modern Comedy*, ranging from Chekhov to Brecht and probably including recent Australian work. The plays will then be presented in an area between

Collingwood and Remington, and the company will also be involved in workshops, reading and discussions which "will stem from a consideration of the body as a communicative medium".

Auditions for the four acting places will be held in late February, further details can be obtained from Charles Kemp, Gernand College, Parkville, 3052.

I N F O

Playwrights in Residence. Last year the Australia Council Literature and Theatre Boards were asking for applications for their scheme to have playwrights in residence at various theatres, and they have now made their decision. The two boards (who jointly fund the scheme) were very impressed with the quality of the applications submitted and found it somewhat difficult to work within present budgetary restrictions. The majority who were successful were seen as either providing theatrical experience for promising playwrights or offering educational enrichment for young people through the medium of theatre.

The successful applicants are Stephen Sewell, with the AFG Co-op, Peter Matheson at Fourbells TIE Company, La Mama has Barry Dickson, Mary Gage a resident writer with the National Perth Ingle Knight with the Theatre of the Dead. Mid Perth will



John Romeril — playwright-in-residence with Red House in Canberra

work at Nimrod, John Stergomo to the Q. Perth the Red House Theatre Workshop in Canberra has John Romeril. Salamancas Theatre Company have John Lowe and then he goes on to the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre. F. J. Willen

followed by Alan Seymour will be working at the VIC Adelaide, the Marconette Theatre will have Richard Tulloch and Ron Blair will be at Too-Truth.

The Boards were reluctant to assist companies that intended employing as

playwrights people who were working with those particular companies in a salaried capacity and to assist the employment of writers who had already enjoyed considerable experience in the theatre.

The Trust is involved in bringing out two great British comedians over the next few weeks. Spike Milligan is bringing out a new one-man show called *An Alarming Situation*. *Evening With Spike Milligan and Friends*, the friends being songwriters Mike McGlennan and accompanist Carl Vine which starts at the Theatre Royal in Sydney on February 11.

And the next is Robert Morley, opening on March 13 in an Alan Bennett play called *The Old Country*.

about an exiled spy based on the Kim Philby story. The play had a successful run in the West End a couple of years ago with a very different actor in the lead role, Alec Guinness. This will be Morley's first appearance in Australia since his tour of *How The Other Half Loves* in 1973, and his first serious acting role since he played Oscar Wilde in the classic British film about Wilde's life. He hopes to take this production to Broadway after the tour here.

Robert Morley





Carole Gartner

National Secretariat Following the original meetings about an Association for the Development of Australian Professional Theatre (ADAPT - see Comment, November 79) a meeting of representatives from all performing arts companies was held in Canberra in late November. The meeting elected a steering committee to prepare a report on the structure, funding, functions and staffing of such a co-operative service organisation.

The steering committee consists of Stephen Barry (National Theatre, Perth), Alan Edwards (QTC), Carole Gartner (Hoople), Jeffrey Jaymison Smith (AETT), Justin MacDonald (Australian Opera) and Stuart Thompson (Manonette Theatre).

Carole Gartner commented "This is a vital step

in the development of the performing arts. The co-operative spirit of the organisation is most encouraging. Companies from the whole spectrum of the non-profit performing arts - drama, opera, dance, puppetry and youth theatre - have expressed their support.

"The national secretariat will be a self-help body. Its functions will include the joint development of arts policies, the safe-guarding of on-going financial support, and the development of shared services and information.

"Lobbying governments and the community will be a primary function. We must stress the importance of the performing arts in Australia's cultural and economic development. We can support the Australia Council's work in this regard."

Nimrod are the first with another mission in the subsidised theatre establishment, they have just appointed writer and children's theatre expert, Christine Westwood to the position of Special Projects Person.

Christine's definition of the job is dealing with the theatre with everything that is not white middle-class male that is blacks, women, children, education, ethnic communities and people for whom English is not the first language.

The work to be done will go two ways: both getting these groups into the Nimrod more, and to take the work of the theatre to them. No specific modes of operating have yet been decided upon, but somehow

Ms Westwood will be attempting to dovetail these minorities into the programming of traditional Nimrod shows as well as going out to collect new material, and producing shows from and with this. Her particular hopes are to look into celebration days of communities, and especially to involve more young people so they grow up with the concept of theatre.

"The establishment term is 'democratising the performing arts', but it boils down to greatly improving access to the high quality, government subsidised arts. Nimrod is in an ideal geographical position to do this."

The position will last as long as the money holds out.



Christine Westwood

QTC PLAY COMPETITION

Dear Sir,

Recently I entered a play writing competition for the Queensland Theatre Company advertised in the Melbourne Age Newspaper, during the month of May this year.

I waited until December for the Judges award and as it was the first play I had ever written I was most anxious to learn the result of the competition.

The prize was \$5,000. Imagine my disappointment when I learnt that nobody had won. My script was sent back to me and I acknowledge that I am a rank amateur so I didn't expect to win. However I was stunned to think that none of the others were to be rewarded. Surely an encouragement award of \$50.00 could have helped some bright aspiring talent somewhere on this vast continent of ours to continue to try?

I have enjoyed reading your magazine. A friend has just introduced me to it and I will certainly be buying it from now on. Sincerely,

Heather T. Thornton,
Greenwichough, Vic.



Queensland Theatre Company

100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178, 180, 182, 184, 186, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272, 274, 276, 278, 280, 282, 284, 286, 288, 290, 292, 294, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 318, 320, 322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 334, 336, 338, 340, 342, 344, 346, 348, 350, 352, 354, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364, 366, 368, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378, 380, 382, 384, 386, 388, 390, 392, 394, 396, 398, 400, 402, 404, 406, 408, 410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 450, 452, 454, 456, 458, 460, 462, 464, 466, 468, 470, 472, 474, 476, 478, 480, 482, 484, 486, 488, 490, 492, 494, 496, 498, 500, 502, 504, 506, 508, 510, 512, 514, 516, 518, 520, 522, 524, 526, 528, 530, 532, 534, 536, 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 558, 560, 562, 564, 566, 568, 570, 572, 574, 576, 578, 580, 582, 584, 586, 588, 590, 592, 594, 596, 598, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, 612, 614, 616, 618, 620, 622, 624, 626, 628, 630, 632, 634, 636, 638, 640, 642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 654, 656, 658, 660, 662, 664, 666, 668, 670, 672, 674, 676, 678, 680, 682, 684, 686, 688, 690, 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, 722, 724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738, 740, 742, 744, 746, 748, 750, 752, 754, 756, 758, 760, 762, 764, 766, 768, 770, 772, 774, 776, 778, 780, 782, 784, 786, 788, 790, 792, 794, 796, 798, 800, 802, 804, 806, 808, 810, 812, 814, 816, 818, 820, 822, 824, 826, 828, 830, 832, 834, 836, 838, 840, 842, 844, 846, 848, 850, 852, 854, 856, 858, 860, 862, 864, 866, 868, 870, 872, 874, 876, 878, 880, 882, 884, 886, 888, 890, 892, 894, 896, 898, 900, 902, 904, 906, 908, 910, 912, 914, 916, 918, 920, 922, 924, 926, 928, 930, 932, 934, 936, 938, 940, 942, 944, 946, 948, 950, 952, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970, 972, 974, 976, 978, 980, 982, 984, 986, 988, 990, 992, 994, 996, 998, 1000.

PLAYLAB SUGGESTION

Dear Sir,

We would like to ask what was the purpose of the Queensland Theatre Company's National Playwright's Competition held to celebrate its 10th anniversary?

Was it a competition to find a promising Australian playwright? Or simply a competition to find a ready made vehicle through which the Company could display or support for Australian playwrights?

In either event, according to the three judges (Conner, Macf, Tuesday 4th December and The Australian) the competitors were simply not good enough.

What then has been the value of the

exercise and can the matter be allowed to rest there? We believe not. Already the cost has been considerable, three professional people busy given a significant amount of their valuable time in making these plays. 148 writers have contributed their writing time, and there remains the question of the prize money. \$5000.00.

The problem appears to be one of quality.

In the opinion of the judges, none of the playwrights competing could be said to have "succeeded", none of the plays were considered "worthy of winning", "of sufficient quality", "of national significance" and there was no ready made vehicle upon which the Queensland Theatre Company was prepared to "make its reputation".

So the competition might be said to have failed.

The questions we must now ask are how can the investment already made in the venture be supported and how can the quality of Australian playwrighting be improved without relying on the names of the "top ten or fifteen"?

Before suggesting an answer, we would like your readers to know a little of the feelings and opinions of both playwrights themselves and others involved with theatre in Queensland.

At the second Queensland Playwright's Conference held earlier this year, sixty seven people unanimously agreed that Australian playwrighting would stand a better chance of improving if some emphasis was given and money channelled towards the playwright's need first to be part of a workshop and second to receive sympathetic workshoping of a promising play from a workshop, prepared to programme the work for eventual production. Competitions alone were not enough.

With respect then, may we suggest that the Board of the Queensland Theatre Company consider the following: that the prize money of \$5000.00 be paid to a theatre company of their choice anywhere in Australia and suitable to the playwright, who is prepared to offer a sympathetic workshop period and eventual public production to any one of the four plays that the judges considered worth a "fourth reading".

This we believe would be a truly worthwhile concern of the Queensland Theatre Company's tenth anniversary celebration.

Glen Davis — President — Playlab

(Queensland Playwright's Fellowship)
Jennifer Blackledge — Immediate Past President (aka Basic Theatre)
Allene Nelson — Former Lecturer, English Department University of Qld.
Richard Lotheringham — Senior Tutor, English Department University of Queensland, Theatre Director and Critic
Rud Lerner — Chairman Playlab Press
Bill Sherrin — Writer
Steve Sewell — Writer
John Bradles — Writer
Lorna Bell — Writer
Ken Mitchell — Writer
None of whom entered the competition.
Signed on behalf of and with the permission of the above:
Jennifer Blackledge

OPEN LETTER TO THE THEATRE BOARD

Dear Mr Adams,

We wonder what the motives of your Board might be in reducing the funding of La Mama.

Who then? Their total gain is absolutely and compared to other companies, a drop in the wine glass at lunch time, less of a few sips, the cancellation of two advertisements, the more efficient working of one Board meeting or the loss on one of the silver productions seen this year.

What sort of perversion is it that the most cool and attentively efficient theatrical body in the country should lose 40% of its legs, or heads or limbs or cut off?

Could it be that the La Mama alumni don't have the glass that serves beer brought them? Could it be that your Board is ignorant, not only of the importance of the job in the past, but its continued importance in the present? Don't they like the kind of work people do now? Or are they just a little forgetful, somewhat absent minded, and will rectify this absurd situation pronto?

If all the theatre people, the artists, the film makers and the poets who have been well served by La Mama over the years, came and stood around your Board table, we should soon see where confidence and common sense in wouldn't be sitting down.

Give La Mama her money, strangers. Just because it's little doesn't mean it's not great.

Sincerely,
Garry Harrison
Philip Adams
E. Brunswick, Vic

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



By Norman Kervell

Entrepreneur Kenn Brodriak, in an article specially written for the 74th Anniversary issue of *Flowers*, sets the

We have moved

But there's still no business like...

SHOWBUSINESS BOOKSHOP

now at our new enlarged premises

1ST FLOOR, 20-22 McKillop St.,

MELBOURNE 3000

PHONE (03) 47 5301 • 4 LINES

Stage sections of scripts from English Theatre Guild Dramatists Play Service, Every Man-Somebody, French Faber, Comedies Melbourn Dramatic Pub Co. We carry Theatre Australia After Dark, Dance Magazine, Plays & Players, Dance & Dancers, Films & Filming, Screen Theatrical Make-up, Lendrum Make-up Special, audition to Mail Order Co. customers

CONTACT VIN FUSTER FOR PROMPT
ATTENTION

Mona Workman

Makers of fine quality
wigs, hairpieces, beards,
moustaches, side levers
Made to Order

- Wigs for hire for commercials at reasonable rates
- For Film, Stage & TV

Tel. (02) 33-6628

1st Floor, 105 Oxford Street,
Paddington N.S.W. 2021

pattern for commercial theatre in the '80s as short, in and out seasons at high prices at the largest capital city arenas. Instead of the present eight or nine month runs in Sydney and Melbourne, he suggests, it will be eight weeks each in Sydney and Melbourne, four weeks in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. "I think there will be enough people to support a policy, certainly with morsels of big stars, big arenas and high prices," he says.

Kenn predicts also that commercial theatre will be subsidised in the 1990s. Talk about subsidised thinking! The government has a sticky enough job selling taxpayers the doctrine of subsidised non-commercial culture. Commercial theatre? NEVER!

On programmes, he notes that J.C. Williamson Productions, in association with Derek Glynn and Michael Edgley, will stage *Star Line First And Third Of England* (with Derek Nomura's and *House Life Is A Joke*) at Melbourne's Cook and Hayden Price Attractions will present the world premiere of a musical based on Seven Little Angels, plus revivals of *The Kingfisher* and *A Star Is Born*, ABC-Paradise's big act will be the Neil Simon hit musical, *They're Playing Our Song*.

Michael Edgley, writing for the same issue of *Flowers*, says he and probably other promoters will concentrate in the '90s on small, intimate plays with a big star by-name contemporary attractions like Elton John and giant family spectacles like the Moscow Circus. He adds that it is no longer profitable to mount musicals, estimating that while it cost \$400,000 to stage *A Chorus Line* and \$400,000 for *Amateur*, the producers of *Evie* will be up for more than \$1,000,000 before the curtain rises in April.

The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust's entrepreneurial policy for 1990 is geared closer to the concept of its founders 25 years ago. "A theatre of Australians, by Australians for Australians." Marketing and promotions manager John Little says Australian production accounts for a major portion of the year's box-off.

Big-name stars will be imported for some shows. Robert Morley next month for *The Old Country*, Leslie Caron and Louis Jourdan in June for

the Broadway farce, *U. S. Male In Moscow*. But directors, supporting casts, technicians and staging will be Australian. Fully imported attractions will include a Spanish puppet theatre, La Círcula (March), The Dance Theatre of Harlem (June) and the Buddy Rich Big Band with Mel Tormé (June).

I read recently that an Australian actress, unknown to me, had returned from America with two plays she plans to present here. I hope she doesn't think they are new to Sydney. One is Charles Dumas's *The Drapers' Game*, which I saw back in 1932 staged by the short-lived Jimmies' Miss Theatre Club as a lunch hour show in a specially fitted large shop on the then-new Edgell Court. Players were Mollie MacLeod and Mirra Lee.

Aprons of which, I hear two well-known showbiz people are looking for a venue to launch a new lunch-hour theatre in Sydney. Here's hoping.

Sydney actress Valerie Newstead is off to New Zealand later this month to appear at the Christchurch Arts Festival from March 8 to 15. Christchurch Repertory Company has invited her to play again the Jewish mother she has portrayed in each of the several productions of *Mommy* Newstead's *Some Difference*. She will also appear in lunchtime performances of Claire Booth Luce's *Slam The Door* South.

Sydney Opera House attendance figures, presented in the Opera House Trust's last annual report as percentages of capacity, afford some interesting comparisons. Appropriately enough, classical music consistently tops pop music and drama.

Heading the list is the long-awaited inaugural organ recital, which achieved the ultimate 100 percent attendance. Then comes opera, peaking at 98 percent, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society at 98, chamber music at 95, ballet at 91, choral concerts at 89.

Most successful in the lighter field were *Chicago* Zambie at 87 percent and the Shell National Folklore Festival at 75, but in contrast the *Home* Scott Quartet drew only 55, the twilight concerts 39, the people's concerts 31, a light disco night a mere 29 and David Gray 22.

Drama managed 82 percent for evening performances, but only a 57 for matinees.

SPOTLIGHT

NONI HAZLEHURST

By Tony Sheldon

A friend of mine recently commented that 1980 seemed likely to become "the year of Noni Hazlehurst". This statement evokes no real gift for clairvoyance, as one merely has to look at the lady's schedule to appreciate its probability: after the highly successful *Jane Street*/Nimrod season of *On Our Selection*, Noni plays Mrs Fliss in Maurice Murphy's film version of *Fanny*, Fliss, returns to the Nimrod for a principal role as



Steve Sewell's *Tramper* with Pernie Hackforth-Jones, Colin Fiebig, Max Gillies and Barry O'neil, under the direction of Neil Armfield, then co-starring with Mel Gibson for the Sydney Theatre Company in *No Matter — No Pack Deal* with a cast including Ron Falk, Julie Hamilton, Al Thomas, Janice Finn and Brandon Burke.

Noni's had line-up for any actor, and in Norm Macdonald's case, well-deserved. Having played in only four shows in seven years, this attractive blonde singer-actress has already established herself as one of the most interesting and capable performers in the country. She's a worker, and undoubtedly will continue to refine and expand her talents, as befits her heritage.

Noni is the product of a rather sprawling theatrical family, consisting of high-wire and trapeze artists, singers, organists and sea-batting champions. Her mother, Lita Lee, was a tap dancer and ingenue in British touring shows when she met her future husband, singer/comedian Ray Canada.

"He was in India all through the war entertaining the troops, he'd come on dressed as an old tramp with funny make-up and do a stuttering act, lots of falls and tripping over, then he'd break into an aria from an opera with this amazing tenor voice. He'd kill 'em, they just fell over. I've got a record of his singing "Trees" which he recorded when he was twenty-eight... he hit Top C at the end and it's not falsetto, and he holds it for about forty-eight bars. An extraordinary singer."

Noni's parents gave up the business and migrated to Australia on the £10 scheme in 1950 to have children. They were determined that Noni and her brother Cameron should enjoy the benefits of a full education; nonetheless, Noni was given singing lessons from her father and coached in ballet and piano from an early age.

"I never considered doing anything else other than singing and acting. But I never wanted to work as a kid... my family forced me into auditions for *Sixty-Six Sonnets*... I didn't really want to test myself because I always had visions of myself being an older person and getting all the work. I did things like learning accents at an early age, when you know what you want to do from that age then everything becomes towards that end and later it's really

easy. Also, being surrounded by show business, you never have any doubts about how wonderful it's going to be."

After graduating from a Melbourne Presbyterian Girls' College, Noni auditioned for NIDA, but John Clarke felt she was perhaps "too young" to cope with the rigours of Sydney, so she enrolled for the Drama course at Adelaide's Flinders University. There she happily lived on campus and studied mime, singing, fencing, ballet, Commedia and Noh drama with such classmates as Bob Barnes, Laurel McGowan and Ross Bentsen.



"We had an amazing teacher called Yutaka Wada (who did *Shogun* at St Martinus in Melbourne) — he was one of five students chosen from around the world to study at the Moscow Arts school under a pupil of Stanislavski — he won a seven year course and he spent the first two years learning Russian, that's how heavy the course was, so with his Japanese uncertainty and the Russian discipline. He had directed at the Berliner Ensemble and he came out to Flinders under such false pretences to take the third year performance group. Well, there was this swag of layabout Adelaide hippies confronted by a little man in a gingham shirt, white shorts, white socks and white shoes saying, 'The only excuse for lateness is death or fatal accident.' We all laughed a lot but he wasn't it. We broke him down a bit by the end and we'd come up a bit, too. He's now Peter Brook's assistant, we were very lucky to have him."

During her third year at Flinders, Noni appeared in the chorus of *Winter the Poet* in her summer holidays. A successful audition for Crawfords Productions led to a string of appearances in *Marlow's Dream* 4, *Roundside* and ABC-TV plays, culminating in a continuing role in *The Boy* — all within six months.

"I copied a lot of flak from the guys back at Flinders though. After this kind of training, it was considered selling yourself cheap and doing rubbish, not seen as a career to an end at all. But I've since evened up with them again in Sydney, they're doing the same things as me, so it's come the full circle, which I asserted it would anyway."

Noni's television career has continued to flourish; most recently she scored as the heroine's hard-bitten best friend in the ABC's *Rule Of Strangers* and as a naive night-club singer in the award-winning TV *Father*. Children are familiar with Noni from her regular appearances on *Paraschool*.

"*Paraschool* is my favourite job of all, you have to be yourself so you have to decide who you are, if only for half an hour. And you have to play to one child only, you can't say 'Children' in case there is a child watching alone. It requires a lot of control, and since doing that show I've never been afraid of a camera again."

June 1977 found Noni back on the boards at Jane Stiles in *Don's Public Affairs*; *The Wind*, *Mare* and *The Roper Show*; her performances prompted critic Frank Harms to predict "Watch out for Noni Macdonald. She's an entrancing young actress with assured potential, not only a clever actress but a fetching singer with instant appeal. Her comic song, 'I Married A Monster', was a show-stopper." However it took almost two years for Noni to find her way back on stage, this time at the 1979 Playwrights' Conference.

"The Conference was the breakthrough for me for theatre, having done all that television I had to make my bed and lie in it. I couldn't meet people in Sydney, nobody knew I was living here, except for Grundy's, and the Conference really gave me confidence for a short burst. I found I could tolerate some of the things I wanted to say, and everyone actually listened to you, which was wonderful."

Immediately afterwards, Noni was back at Jane Street, this time as Lily White in George Whaley's smash hit production *On Our Selection*. Then came the lead role in the Australian premiere of *The Man From Afraid*, scripted by Dorothy Hewson.

"It was commissioned by Stephen Barry for the Perth Playhouse—they also asked Alan Seymour to submit something but they chose Dorothy's—Rose Lilly, Dorothy's daughter, saw me in *Selection* and made an inspired guess—it was just one of those things that was amazing for me. I played both Polly Perkins and Lily Perkins, and Lily is a half-caste, but there were no books other than picture books that I could look at, so I had to get out and meet some aboriginals in Western Australia. That was a great help, it was everything. The cast said 'Oh no no no, you don't want to go down to the pulps.' So I asked if anyone knew any aboriginals. 'Well, I do, but he'd be no help.' Eventually I got onto a little girl who helped me and she was terrific. The Western Australians don't consider Aboriginals at all.

"It's a beautiful play and the music by Jim Cotter is stunning. We did songs from the show on *Nanana* when Perth and they were flooded with requests. They tried to send out bootleg copies of what we'd stopped them, the show is being done in Brisbane and Adelaide and I think Aarne Noone wants to do it in Newcastle."

After the return season of *On Our Selection* at Nimrod, Noni was signed to play Fatty Finn's mother in Maurice Murphy's film version of the Australian cartoon classic. The cast is imposing and relentlessly commercial—Bern Newton, Lorraine Bayley, Gerard Kennedy, Herrn Seips et al. Noni is no stranger to the world of film, her husband of three and a half years is Kevin Dobson (from whom she is now separated), director of *The Mango Tree*. Indeed, Noni acted as a dialogue coach and foreign language consultant on that film, as she is fluent in French and can read and translate German.

"*Fatty Finn* will be a really lovely kids' film. It has a Bob Ellis script which is just hysterical. The kids will have red hair and bright yellow hair, truly cartoon colours. It's my second feature—my first feature was *Getting On* (1980) where I had two lines behind a door, an aerial shot of my

back and a close-up of my hand spilling tea on Sheila Hempman. That was a good day's work."

In her spare time (the girl has spare time!) Noni is an active member of the Mosaic Light Company, a group of amateurs and craftsmen dedicated to the improvement of the industry in general.

"Actors are seen as a threat, anything co-operative is seen as a threat to rationalism and discipline. I think it's outrageous that there's such a chasm between the creative elements in a production whether it be a play, or, particularly a film, from the lowliest

People ask me what I want to do with my life...I say that I'm doing it.

person who directs the traffic through to the actor, the director, the producer.

There's such a chasm that they don't even know one another! If you're going to make a low budget film, I think the only way to do it is to get everyone together, it doesn't matter if you're only got one day on the film and the producer should introduce everyone to the director and the cameraman and say, 'You've read the script, this is what we want to do, this is our budget, this is what we could do if anyone has any suggestions.' Why not do it like that? I find it embarrassing not to be introduced to the crew—if they're not with you like an audience in a theatre might be while you're performing then you're really pushing it uphill. The Mosaic Light Co. is dedicated to these ends. There are about 20 on the books, all you have to do is list your resources, skills or tools. As an actor, painter, guitarist, or

whatever. We have meetings on Sunday mornings and play readings. Some of our group who were in *Mud*

Men went out to a deaf school for children who were having trouble differentiating between screen violence and real violence. They took video cameras out there and staged a fight between two gangs using the kids as extras, then they replayed the tape so the children—'it was very successful. A group just worked at the Film School on a third year student's project, they acted, entered, did the art direction, scouted locations..."

The fact that Noni is an accomplished singer has remained largely unmentioned except by the occasional sharp-witted director like Harold Prince. Noni was one of the three finalists for the title role in *Evie*.

"I'm very fatalistic about my work and I don't believe I was meant to do it. It doesn't worry me. I don't use the singing much because I have the dream that one day Don Burrows will come to me and say 'I want you to sing with my band'—and things like that are starting to happen. I could never leave the club. I'm not tough enough. It would be a fantastic experience, but I'd rather do musical comedy or cabarets, or gigs with a band."

She is perfectly happy to remain in Sydney for the time being, as the beliefs we are very lucky in our work opportunities here, even though she is the possessor of a British passport, she has no desire to work in London. Should the occasion arise, she would rather work in America, France or Germany.

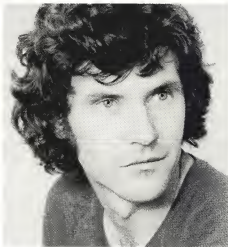
"I could do all the George Mallaby roles in French song operas—I don't think I'll be doing *La Dame Aux Camélias* or the *Mohere* Theatre for a while."

And yes, Noni Harlehurst is unashamedly ambitious.

"I don't want to be 'A Star', I just want to keep working, doing things that present some sort of a challenge, and having people enjoy me. My ambition is just to keep the ball rolling. People ask me what I want to do with my life. I say that I'm doing it. If something else presents itself I might follow that up, but right now what I'm doing occupies all my time. I could make it occupy even more of my time if I wasn't lazy. I don't do nearly enough."

Thousands would argue, Noni!

La Boite's New Artistic Director Malcolm Blaylocke



Profile By Richard Fotheringham

When Malcolm Blaylocke first dropped into the artistic director's chair in October, La Boite was already enjoying a run of success which must have seemed hard to surpass, let alone redirect. Four out of five of the local awards (made by the *Telegraph*) had gone to the theater for its productions in 1979, it was averaging a healthy 80% attendance, and was finishing the year with two smash hits, *Then Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (in which the

theatre was transformed from lover to backstage corridor into a "Heavenly hall" and a splendid Christmas romp *Sheer Trick Hobbes*.

There were even those who were claiming to have heard the bell toll. The previous artistic director Rick Billingham had left in some frustration. His vision of a totally professional company had not eventuated, and across town Rick's comrade in arms John Minton was already moving the reformed professional TN Company into the same kind of repertoire. Already the TN have beaten Blaylocke to the rights for *Errol Flynn's Great Big Adventure Book*, and he has had to negotiate with them to get *Max From Workington*.

To the delight and the danger of Malcolm Blaylocke's appointment is that he intends to push La Boite further along the upstaircase they've been successfully treading the last few years and make the theatre a mecca for local playwrights. He's come to Brisbane with his reputation riding squarely on the years he spent as co-founder and director of South Australia's Circle Company, which

first brought the plays of Rob George and Steve Spear to national notice.

Since arriving in Brisbane he has contacted Steve Sewell, whose *Travlers* was gratefully purchased by the Prism Factory in 1979, and Errol O'Neill, whose scripts for the Popular Theatre Troupe have re-established him as a writer as well as actor. They and others will be contributing to a Brisbane version of *Brubaker* in 1980 and Blaylocke's power of positive thinking (the roots of a string of other South Australian playwrights whose work he directed for the Circle Company) could well be the catalyst that Queensland writers have long needed.

Malcolm Blaylocke summarizes his policy with two brief dictums: "As much local playwriting as possible" and "La Boite ought to go further than just entertainers". The danger in this bold approach is that La Boite's success with audiences has come almost in spite of its reputation as a place for new writing and new thinking. Noel Coward's *Fallen Angels* was the hit of 79, and Louis Nowra's *Luxury* the wooden spooner.

Of other Australian scripts only John Bradley's *Arab Sheu* had what I imagine Blaylocke is looking for: substance and success, though *The Milk Parrot Show* and *Sheer Trick Hobbes* could be justified on other grounds (*Milk* as an experiment in group devised vaudeville and *Hobbes* for exposing local writer Simon Denner's work and providing a training ground for a large young cast under professional direction).

Blaylocke's response to this dilemma has been to announce a 1980 season of all Australian plays, but including at least three (*Travlers*, *Workington*, *Brubaker*) with a good track record. Dave Allen's *Dulcener* has also been programmed, and space left for another local script. And so he is out and about, talking to writers. He's hoping for a writer-in-residence later in the year, and to revive the group documentaries which Rick Billingham introduced but which faded after *Happy Birthday East Tower*. With conventional programming and active proselytising he's hoping the Noel Cowards won't be needed. Fingers crossed.

SUBSCRIBE TO Theatre Australia



The only national magazine of the performing arts

Features and reviews of Theatre, Opera, Dance, Film and Records, a National Guide and more



BINDERS

Stunning deep blue binders with gold blocked lettering to hold your Theatre Australia volumes by volume. Each holds twelve issues.
1 binder \$6* 2 binders \$11*
*Plus fifty cents postage and handling

T-SHIRTS

Display your enthusiasm for the performing arts with these bold t-shirts. Special price only \$5.90. Small Medium Large
*Plus fifty cents postage and handling



Only \$21.00 post FREE for twelve issues

Or Buy two and SAVE even more.

— a gift subscription to Theatre Australia is a present that keeps on coming.
\$40.00 for two.

Name

Address

State

Postcode

(U) TELEPHONE NO.

Name

Address

6 Corporation
PO Box 181, Dunedin

NAME

NAME

NAME

Address

Expires Date

ORDER FORM FOR BINDERS & T-SHIRTS

Please send

1 binder for \$6

2 binders for \$11

Please send

Small T-shirt

Special price only \$5.90

Medium T-shirt

Large T-shirt

Plus fifty cents for postage and handling

Please print full name and address in panel above

Please cheque/Money order/Bankcard for \$

MAIL TO: THEATRE PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
80 Elizabeth Street, Mayfield N.S.W. 2161



THE FESTIVAL OF PERTH

By Festival Director David Blenkinsop

Later this month Perth will celebrate its 28th Festival of Perth and it is perhaps an appropriate time to look back on the achievements of Australia's oldest Arts Festival. Since the last War there has been an explosion of arts festivals all over the world and whilst many of them are genuine enough there are others whose credentials are of a more spurious nature gaining their inspiration from commercial or self motivated interests and having scant regard for the communities upon which they are imposed.

Cathy Downes, *The Case of
Katherine Mansfield Heart-
sick and Scorned Theatre*

Continued

The Festival of Perth grew out of the very real desire to provide entertainment of quality to the visitors to The Adult Education Board's Annual Summer School at the University Frimantle to which other members of the public were warmly welcomed. The undoubted strength of the Festival of Perth lies in roots which were planted in such a meaningful way by its visionary founder, Fred Alexander, in the summer of 1933. Writing in the foreword to this first Festival, he wrote: "The hope is expressed that the programme offered in this first Festival may encourage West Australians to draw on real advantages of scene and climate to offset disabilities imposed by distance. The aim in subsequent Festivals will continue to be to offer the best that is available from British, European, American, Asian as well as Australian sources and, as time goes on, to link these cultural services with tourism and sporting activities."

Of course Perth at that time was seldom a part of call for visiting international attractions due largely to the lack of suitable facilities and although there have been many changes in the intervening 28 years the Festival has never lost sight of its obligation to the community and almost certainly the constraints imposed by the geographical isolation of the city have given the Festival the special strength and purpose which other festivals so often lack.

It is not a coincidence that in the Northern Hemisphere the greatest Festivals have been established in the smaller and more isolated cities and towns like Edinburgh, Helsinki and Salzburg whilst attempts to create similar events in such huge cities as London and Paris have nearly always been disastrous.

Perth is more obviously fortunate in other respects. It enjoys an unparalleled situation and climate and only the barrier of distance saves it from becoming a shambles for tourists. It boasts a widely spread collection of splendid venues for its arts activities — can there be another university in the world so beautifully situated which enjoys the use of six such spectacular additions? If Perth in fact lacks anything as a Festival City it is in the area of the lyric theatre. Its



Bob Berky

Majesty's Theatre is this year still in a state of commission due to an increasingly elongated renovation programme and this has regrettably resulted in our having to abandon our plans to include opera in our programme.

The Festival has traditionally been an annual event and while there has been much heart searching particularly amongst our orchestra staff on the subject of change to a biennial pattern the event remains a hardy annual very much in the tradition of Edinburgh.

The programming of the Festival throughout its history has embraced five main areas of activity — music and dance in all their many and varied forms, theatre, film, the visual arts and crafts and community activities. Balance and innovation have always been the most important considerations in planning.

Undoubtedly the greatest pitfalls of all are the ever present temptations to provide a surplus of riches in one area at the expense of another or to repeatedly re-engage successful attractions. It is equally dangerous to provide a ten course banquet when the public is starved after eight. Festival themes too can easily collapse between conception and harvest as the main pillars of your construction fall in every increasing heaps along the wayide of your planning.

Inevitably the greatest problem area is that of finance. Quite simply quality costs. The great painter Schnabel once approached for cheap lessons by a

student remarked: "My fee is five guineas. I also give three guineas lessons but I don't really recommend them!"

We are becoming increasingly dependent on sponsors from the private sector for our continued survival. Government is barely providing us with the ingredients for the plainest sponge cake and we must look elsewhere for the currants and the icing. Last year 61% of our entrepreneurial funding was raised from the private sector and only 19% from Government and this situation will be repeated again this year. There is little doubt that if we are to continue to protect the kind of festival we believe in, increasingly more of our time must be spent in raising funds from sources other than Government.

In recent years in order to impose a greater control on programme content and maintain standards of excellence, the Festival has assumed an increasingly significant role as an entrepreneur. Such artists and companies as the Old Vic Theatre Company, The London Early Music Group, Jean François Paillard Chamber Orchestra, Dury Gillepie, Oscar Peterson, Konrad Scott, Nola Rex, Tam Stoppard, Sir Michael Tippett, George MacBeth and the Yous July Puppet Theatre have all toured Australia under the aegis of the Festival. We even sent Yves July to Tahiti last year! This year the Festival brings to Australia for the first time the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Great Britain, the Heartache and Sorrow Theatre Company, Bob Berky, Northern Drift, Stan Getz and Tama Tama.

Quite clearly we believe that we have not only an important contribution to make to the national arts scene but an equal responsibility to ensure that our international imports are not only of the highest possible merit but that they are seen by as many people as possible including those in less accessible areas of the country.

The 1980 Festival has been heralded by Sir Russell Drysdale's strikingly humorous poster depicting a Pierrot directing the capricious choreography of a seemingly "lumpy" black swan. The painting is the apt forerunner of a programme through which courses a

rich vein of humour, comedy and wit in the theatre programme Chris Harris (*Keep It Aft*) presents the Australian premiere of his new show *They're The Men To Do It* — a history of the seaside as seen through the eyes of three generations of Punch and Judy men. Bob Berk, America's leading mime and clown artist, making his first appearance in Australia will present his zany entertainment *Foxtrotfive*, winner of a special award at last year's Edinburgh Festival.

The National Theatre Company will present the Australian premiere of Peter Nichols' hardy musical comedy *Producers on Parade* (directed by Stephen Barry) and the WA Theatre Company will present Cliff Green's *Cap One* (directed by Bob Faggetter). Arch-geek Spike Milligan, Jasper Carrott, Richard Stilgos and the BBC's Northern Drift team of Henry Livings and Alex Glasgow, complete the fringe line up.

The major international drama offering will be provided by John Houseman's Acting Company of New York who will present their highly-acclaimed Broadway production of

Eleventh Hour by Paul Foster, whilst the Heartache and Sorrow Theatre Company from New Zealand will present the Australian premiere of *The Case Of Katherine Mansfield* by Cathy Downes another award winner at last year's Edinburgh Festival. The Hole in the Wall Company has chosen two new Australian plays for their Festival season. Deonon Clarke's *Roses in One Season* and Jack Hibbard's *I Was at Mann Park* specially written for Perth actor Neville Tindle.

Bridging the gap between theatre and music programmes will be two virtuoso performers in the pleasing shapes of Cathy Bertrando and the legendary Gipsy Mañ from the Berliner Ensemble who makes her first ever appearance in Australia. Miss May is to present two Brecht programmes (Playhouse and Concert Hall) and her famous Berlin Cabaret programme as a late-night special in the Festival Club.

The music programme features three great ensembles from Europe — the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Netherlands Wind Ensemble and

the Fires of London under their founder-director Peter Maxwell Davies. Additional recital concerts will be given by Jane Manning, the Aronniks, Tans and Linda Grycholskova. Jazz will again be a prominent feature of the music programme with the legendary Stan-Lee Tanga Mena and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Great Britain all making their first appearances in Australia at the Festival.

The visual arts programme includes exhibitions from Germany, Japan, China and Britain. The highlight here will inevitably be the Treasures of London Exhibition from the Wonderful Company of Goldsmiths' in London.

For the rest there is the Film Festival (which includes fifteen award winning films), many street performances, visits from Britain's Razzie Show Company, the Monocentric Theatre of Australia, Gourmet Festivals, great sporting attractions and an increasingly bleary-eyed Festival staff.

Why not come and see how the West is won?



Members of the Acting Company of New York in Linda Cohn's production of *Eleventh Hour*.

TELEVISION

1980

Written and compiled by Michael Hohensee



The ABC — Into the Eighties

Next month March ABC-TV's drama department has two major series, both "time pieces", ready for screening. *Tinseltown*, an adventure which takes us into the future, and *Townless Land*, an epic love story set against Australia's founding.

Townless Land, written by Peter Yeldham and based on Eleanor Dark's trilogy, will have taken six months of filming and costing something around \$15 million it is their biggest drama undertaking to date (See separate story).

Tinseltown stars Robert Coleby,

Kate Sheel and John Mullan. Concerned by writer Colin Free, it concerns an electronics engineer who discovers that the Premier and his henchmen plan to limit individual freedom by introducing new laws. Aware that their plans have leaked out here is quickly put to rest. But thanks to a doctor friend his body is put on ice, literally, and is revived 10 years later. And in 1991 he wakes up to take on the leaders of a State which is becoming more totalitarian by the day.

The 13 one-hour episodes constitute a series which, says the ABC, is futuristic, not sci-fi.

Both *Tinseltown* and *Townless Land* are part of a formula laid down last year, to produce essentially quality Australian works which have included series, one-off plays, trilogies and also TV versions of theatre plays. The pattern is to be closely followed for 1980-81. Within the spectrum, says head of drama Geoff Dancich, there will always be an adventure type series.

"We had the successful *Patrol Boat* last year, there's *Tinseltown* this year and the next one is tentatively titled, *Spawning Chance*."

In the latter, Ray Barrett will play the lead role of a syndicated journalist in the (13 x 60 min) series which will

be set against the backdrop of international sporting events. His character will be dedicated to exposing what goes on behind the scenes.

"We'll have an offender," said Dancich, "who's a woman, but with no romantic interest. You won't be seeing rugby league, or Aussie rules featuring. It will be international sports, golf, tennis, athletics."

The series is being written by Peter Yeldham (*Road From The Morning*, *Townless Land*) from an idea by ABC-TV producer Ray Alchin.

Another story (of similar length) on the drawing board for 1980-81 is *Paradise*. It will be written by actor Michael Craig who also wrote the award-winning, *The Fourth Wish*. Dancich describes it as "a vehicle for social comment. It's about an inner-city Roman Catholic priest and how he handles human truths against the parody of a suburban congregation."

In the books area, the ABC intends adapting three Alan Marshall books — *I Can Jump Puddles*, *That Is The Grass* and *Bequested Any The Feet* — into a series of 10 one-hour episodes.

"They'll be presented as a progressive story. Each episode will be an entity in itself with no cliffhangers. We'll possibly show those at 7.40pm.

(Continued over page)

on a Sunday night," Daniels said.

The ABC has also bought Louis 'Stone's novel *Jonah* which will be adapted into four parts. *Jonah* tells of a hunchback boat repairer and is set in the Sydney suburb of Redfern around about 1910. In addition Frank Moorhouse's *Confessionals* — a collection of stories — is also being looked at.

Michael Cass, who last year gave us the sextet of plays *A Place In The World* will be providing a Trilogy which centres on three women — a girl, her mother and the grandmother. "A wedding is the catalyst," Daniels said.

In line with the 1979-80 format, forward planning includes six more theatre plays, a batch of single plays and six plays to be directed by those with little, or no, previous experience — a move, says Daniels, to unearth new directional talent.

The six theatre plays will include, at this stage, *Going Home*, *Harold God* and possibly Summer Locke Elton's *Roads*. *Bagles*. At the time of writing negotiations were still going on for *Roads*. *Bagles* and the three remaining plays had not yet been decided.

And in addition to a big children's series to come out of Melbourne, there's a possible co-production of *Coral Island* with Britain's Thames TV.

Output of drama hours for TV will have dropped to about 62 hours for 1979-80 due mainly to *The Twinkles Land* commitment. Output will return to the norm, about 80 hours, for the coming year, says Daniels.

Ever since Garry McDonald as Norman Gordon quit the ABC and went commercial the light entertainment department have never quite got as laughing again. They are trying. Their *Tinkled Pool* series of plays was launched to see if they could unearth some comedy. Of the seven plays, all of which have been screened, only two made it into follow-up series.

One was *One Day Mums*, which failed, and the other was *Neutral Ground*, renamed *Trial By Marriage* for the series which finished production just before Christmas. The series, written by actor-turned-writer Michael Atkens, will be shown this year. Featuring Jacki Weaver, Peter Summer and Bill Kerr, it promises to be the funniest show coming out of the

ABC for years.

Light entertainment have made a second series of *Tinkled Pool* plays, again with a view to discovering possible series' spin-offs. They, too, will be screened this year. The line-up is *Three Blue Mice* (Jacki Weaver and Peter Summer again plus Martin Harris and Arthur Dignam), *Masterplan* (Max Cullen, Frank Wilson), *A Change of Location* (Peter Whitting), *Nocturnal Brownie Jay* — *The Adventure Game* (Arthur Dignam, Carmen Duggan), *Drums For* (Max Cullen, Gordon Poole and Ron Falk), *Housewifery*, *Housewifery* (Donald McDonald), *Jacki Weaver*, Mel Gibson and Jennifer Hagart and *A Day Over Town* (Michael Atkens and Tina Barrett).

In a bid to further develop their comedy, the ABC earlier this year got together with Thames TV to prepare two 30-minute plays.

Thames provided three British writers, Johann Mostimer and Brian Cook (*Men About The House*, *Grange* and *Unholy* etc) and Vince Powell (*Men*, *The House*, *Love*, *The Verdict* etc), plus two producers, Michael Mills and Mark Seaman. They all came to Sydney and put their heads together with writers this end in a workshop situation.

One pilot, *House Seven* based by Vince Powell, has been made and production of a series, seven to 10 minutes, written by local writers begins next month (March). Basically it's about the three generations of an Italian family living together in Australia: the children are becoming more and more Australian and grandma can't speak English! The main role was written by John Blashal who stars in the pilot.

At this stage no more has been made on the other projected pilot, *Seven Too Late*.



After 10 years in a frozen state, March (Robert Cullen) is thawed out and brought back to the stage by Dr Fallon (Peter Prendergast) in ABC-TV's new adventure *Twinkles Land*. Looking on is March's cousin (Frank) played by Ronit Sher.



Jacki Weaver (as a PR girl) and Peter Tait (as a doctor) playing on the television comedy *Three Men in a Crutch*. One of them plays in *Tumbledown*. The second series of *Tumbledown*.

ABC's Timeless Land Romantic Blockbuster

Ray Alchin, producer of *The Timeless Land*, sees the series — ABC's big one for 1990 — as "a great love story."

In his office, bordering on bush country, he moves about answering calls and checking schedules. Alchin has been with the show almost four months now. He doesn't want to push the eight hours of drama "as historical." Presumably that would have a dulling effect. Certainly there are strong threads of romance weaving their way through the series, adapted

by Peter Goldham from Eleanor Dark's trilogy of novels.

There's a great deal of history, too. *The Timeless Land* spans 23 years, beginning with the founding of the first British colony in Australia in 1788. The First Fleet's convicts, soldiers and Aborigines form the backdrop to the eight one-hour episodes which, against Alchin, he'd like kids to see for the historical events.

"I don't think the odd topics were'st going to offend anyone."

It's a lavish, colorful production which only the ABC could take on at a cost approaching something like \$15 million. And it's a production — 15 days of shooting for one hour of film — which they'll want to sell overseas. And it was with that in mind that they initially went overseas in search of a couple of "stars." Names like Edward Fox and John Thaw were bandied about, but it appears they couldn't come to the party.

There are about 26 substantial parts, with the three key roles being played by Nicola Pagell (she played Anna Karenina in the BBC classic), Michael Craig and Angela Punch McGregor. As Australia's roots unfold, the storyline revolves round Ellen (Angela Punch McGregor), a convict who becomes housekeeper to Stephen Mansson (Michael Craig), an Irish free settler and a man of property. And there's Connor (Nicola Pagell), brought from Ireland by Mansson to be his wife and mistress of Beltrana.

There are many other characters who "come and go", says Alchin. For the proclamation scene there were about 200 cast and crew on set.

Castling the support roles hasn't always been easy. One of Alchin's headaches has been to find actors who'll take on the many cameo roles. "Some of them thought the parts were too small for them. Their prerogative, I suppose."

Other parts in the series, which should be completed by the end of next month and ready for screening in May, are played by Chris Haywood, Robin Swicord, Patrick Jackson, Peter Collingwood, Peter Cookson, newcomer Genevieve Piel, John Fingleton, Noel Trevarthen, Ralph Cotterill, Don Buckham, Olive Baddeley.

(Continued on page 21)



Anna Veiska (as Sarah), left, and Angela Punch McGowan (Ellen) in *The Town is Dark*

Anna Veiska and more

Six months was spent on research. Alchin would have liked more time. "Typically with a series like this when we have to build three solid locations."

"The Georgian era ceased its problems with props. We had to have a lot of antiques through antique dealers because the stuff just isn't generally available. We're going to auction a lot off afterwards," Alchin said.

"And we couldn't get the red material for the uniforms in Australia. So we had to import it from England."

And according to Rob Stewart the series' directing supervisor, Michael Carson (the other two) sounding up carnages and casts of the period caused problems, too. "Some had to be rebuilt, others were hired out — at \$400 a day."

Of course, someone had to make the definitive peace. Alchin reckons the producers of *Agony: The Wind* the

top-rating, locally-made series, cut their costs by keeping out of town which the ABC have had to recreate.

Their replica township had been erected at Kellyville, near Richmond in NSW. This is Sydney in its earliest years, reproduced with lots of plastic sheeting. In two months the mock Government House will have been pulled down. And there's the other two locations. Belconnen, the Manning property and the correct test town.

Bush film in late December could put production back somewhat. They burnt out the camp to which Johnny (Chris Haywood), the son of Ellen, runs to when told to get off the Manning property. The first even chartered the ABC film studio at French's Forest, just north of Sydney, the base headquarters of *The Traveler* and production unit. Much of the bushland leased by the ABC, for

general outdoor filming, went up in flames. The township used for *Ben Hall and Rash* has gone, too.

Authenticity has been earned through to the characters themselves. "Prior Collingwood is the spriting image of Governor Phillip," says Stewart. "He really is a look-alike. Peter comes from a naval background and takes a great personal interest in Phillip. I think he's played him a few times. And John Franklin is incredibly like Governor King."

Historically the series takes us through a period when Phillip tries to make friends with the Aborigines, his association with Bennelong, Governors King and Bligh (played by Ray Barrett), the rum rebellion and the crossing of the Blue Mountains.

But, as Ray Alchin would have it, don't forget it's all a setting for some strong love stories.



Seven — back to Australia

In an attempt, no doubt, to repeat the success of their drama series *Against The Wind*, Seven this year will again be looking to early Australia for high ratings points.

The writers of *Against The Wind*, Ian Jones and Brynwyn Burns, turn to the "true story" of Ned Kelly for a new series, *The Law Dudes*. Production of the eight hours of drama, no one is too sure how it's going to be presented at this stage, should be finished by July and shown on our screens later this year.

We're told it won't be just a tale of an amateur-placed bushranger on the run and shooting up the local constabulary. *The Law Dudes* will also look at "the underlying frustrations and injustices" of the time and study the character of Ned Kelly.

The lead role played by Mick Jagger in the movie and by John Waters in the ABC-TV's dramatised documentary will feature John Jarrett with Sigrid Thornton as Kate Kelly, Ned's sister.

Henry Crawford, producer of *Against The Wind*, begins production of another major series for Seven this year. He will be making what is claimed to be the most expensive mini series (perhaps ABC-TV would contest that with their upcoming \$1.5 million *Timeless Land*) based on Nevil Shute's book, *A Town Like Alice*.

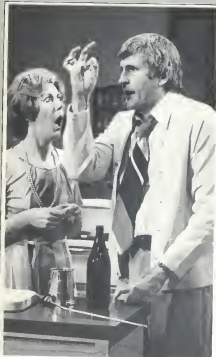
It will take us further, says Seven, than the successful movie which



*1. R. John Howard as Mike Gregson, Terry Donovan (standing) as Vic Campbell, G.D. Barker as Rex Baker and Peter Adams as Jeff Johnson in Channel 7's *Up Shop**



*John Bowler as Paul Macfarlane and Bruce Barry as John Doug Stewart in Channel 7's *Sliver**



Jock Fair and Ross Higgins (Thel & Ted) in *Kingswood Country* on Channel 7

starred Virginia McKenna and the late Peter Finch.

At the time of writing only Bryan Brown had been cast for the series which reportedly has already been pre-sold to the BBC. Local and overseas actors will be used, but the producers

are having trouble finding enough Japanese actors for the show which is set in Malaysia during the Japanese occupation.

At this stage Seven still has to determine whether the completed package will be screened as three two-

hour episodes or six one-hour.

Seven's other new locally-made shows for 1980 include two comedy series: *Kingswood Country*, a sat-com by Naked Year writers Rolly and Sattler, and a Gunston series.

Gunston may not be new, but his best effort, in the process of being made, certainly has a fresh concept. It will on schedule Norman (actor Gary McDonald) should, as you read this, be flying around the country in a chartered 38-year-old DC3.

With a back-up film crew, he'll spend almost two months trying to find his roots. The producers have decided on a change of format — probably not before time — and have taken Norman out on location for the series of eight 30-minute shows.

His flying pad will take him to some of the remotest parts so that he can uncover the real Australia. He'll talk to kangaroos, crocodiles and anyone who'll listen to him. And he's promised to have a look at some of those stones Harry Butler has overturned.

Scheduled for showing this month (Feb) is the BS Productions' (that's Rolly and Sattler) *Kingswood Country*, a spin-off from the *Naked Year Show*. It was developed from sketches in that show which featured leggy Ted Bailpat (Ross Higgins) and his long-suffering wife Thel (Jock Fair). Ted has a narrow outlook on life — everyone's all right, as long as they own a Holden Kingswood!

Ted and Thel live at Worban Crockett with their two children: Craig (Peter Fisher) is 21 and sister Greta (Laurel McGowan), 23, is married to Bruno Bertolucci (Alex Mannix), an Australian born Italian.

As the "wag who race off with my daughter", Bruno causes Ted much concern. But worst of all, his son-in-law owns a purple Valium. Both Ross Higgins and Laurel McGowan were regulars in the *Naked Year Show*. The series will be 13 x 30-minute episodes.

With consistently good ratings, Seven's police show, *Cop Shop* will continue through 1980. Not such a bright future in store for their other soaps, *54th Ave.*, also made by Crawford.

Seven committed themselves to 78 episodes of *54th Ave.* and they run dry next month (March) some time if the ratings haven't picked up by then.

Seven will surely join on the show, a product that never really got off the runway.

The new year's line-up, says Seven, also includes two other series, but both have been on the shelf for some time. *Robin Hood* (26 x 30 mins) is a young people's show which follows the adventures of a pilot and his son who run a charter operation with their ageing amphibious aircraft. The series, a co-production, stars Hu Pryor as Bailey.

Love Thru Neighbour is an Australian drama, as the title suggests, being the ego-centric Eddie Booth (Jack Sorethorn) is Australia to give Sydney some of his expert tongue-lashing. Although the series (13 x 30 mins) was made in Sydney during the first half of last year, it was written by the writer of the British series, Vince Powell.



Dearth of Drama on Showbiz Nine

Despite starting off with a few TV awards last year for some of their telemovies made in conjunction with Film Australia and the South

Australian Film Corporation, the Nine network is not venturing into any new major drama projects for 1980.

It is, however, taking one children's telephone from the packagers, the Grundy Organisation. Written by film man Terry Bourke and devised and produced by Roger Murran, a begin production in early December.

At the time of writing, no one was too sure what to call it. Take your pick from *Stranger Father* and *Ghost Town Gang*. Whatever, Grundy's would like to see it spin off into a long-running series.

Adults featuring in the two-hour show include Max Cullen, Tom Fairley, Hugh Keays-Byrne, Katy Wild, John Hamblin, Ray Meagher and Dennis Glover.

Twelve child actors play a group of kids who band together to help a

(Continued over page)



Jack together again in *The Southsides*. (From left) Tom Meehan, Tom Fairley and Jack Sorethorn.

farmer save his coastal property which harbours an old ghost town. Displaying some business acumen the schoolchildren turn the ghost town into a weekend holiday camp for their city counterparts. And then, presumably, the fun starts!

Nine has become generally regarded as the "showbusiness" network with its local personality wrangle (Don Lane, Mike Walsh and Paul Hogan) and its US light entertainment lineup

It won five of the eight ratings surveys last year (Seven two, Ten one) and its ongoing local drama, *The Young Doctors* and *The Sullivan*, helped it on its winning ways.

With the new season these two shows will be entering their fourth year on air and look set to challenge the record set by *Number 96* which ran for more than five years.

While the good-looking set appear to pop in and out of the *Young*

Doctors' cast, *The Sullivan* seem to have been at war forever. But as the serial closed for 1978 we had, in fact, reached July 1944 with the Sullivan boys freeing themselves of the Changi prisoner of war camp.

In its three years the show has taken its half-way round the world to Greece, Cote, Yugoslavia (in the telemovie *The John Sullivan Story*) and Malaysia. Early on in the piece this year the Sullivans venture into Europe, first stop Holland. Unable to recreate authentically things Dutch in or near Melbourne, the producers took a handful of the cast over there for filming.

And with the European series fans will encounter a number of old favourites reappearing on screen. The new season of surprises begins with a 90-minute special and new into the serial comes actress Liddy Clark playing the part of a Greek showgirl.



Young Doctors to the left (Dr. John Lewis) in the spot Dr. Mike Whitton (Peter Ramsay) with Celia Hunt (Celia Hunt) and Dr. Ramsay (Mike Whitton) in the spot.



Ten enters the quality field

Network Ten (its new sale), recognised more for its output of soap operas, has entered the quality field. It has invested in the \$1 million plus series *Water Under The Bridge*, based on the award-winning novel by expatriate Sumner Locke Elliott.

The book, which won the Patrick White Literary Award in 1977, has been adapted by Eleanor Wintour and Michael Jenkins into nine hours of drama and presumably will be shown on TV in nine, one-hour parts.

The series is currently being made in Sydney and Melbourne and should be completed mid-way through the year.



Lorrie Diamond as Mothé Sparks, and Mike Dorsey, as Vic Marshall, in Australia's latest soap opera, *Arcade*

Set against the backdrop of Sydney Harbour Bridge during the 1930s, it features Jacki Weaver, Robyn Nevin and David Cameron in the lead roles.

It's David Cameron's first major role after playing many support roles in serials including *Power Without Glory*, *Trackers*, *Against the Wind* and *The Saltbush*. In *Wings under The Bridge* he plays Neil Ashford, an aspiring actor. Other investors in the series, which is being produced by former BBC man John McKus, include the Victorian Film Commission.

For the past two years Ten have graced the new season with a serial. There was *The Restless Years* (1978) and *Prisoner* (1979), and this year they've launched into 1980 with *Arcade*. It comes out of the same studio and from the pens of those who produced *Number 96*. Australia's longest-running soap opera to date.

The million-dollar question is, of course, can it live up to the success achieved by *Number 96*? For many years *Number 96* had little opposition

in the soap opera stakes, it being the virtual pioneer. Today, however, *Arcade* joins a plethora of serials cum soap operas filling our screens.

Ten obviously believes there's a large enough audience, and timeless, to assimilate all. But with *The Saltbush*, *The Young Doctors*, *Prisoner*, *The Restless Years*, *Cap Shop* and *Skewes* there's a hint of overkill.

Arcade is being produced at Ten's Sydney studios where a large set representing a shopping arcade has been built. It will have 22 regular parts who include Lorrie Diamond, Mike Dorsey (formerly of 96), Aileen Britton, Danny Adcock, Peggy Toppiano, Christine Harris, Patrick Ward, Anne Schindler, Garth Meade and Maggie Stuart.

A number of the cast have had limited experience on TV, but this didn't seem to hold back the success of *The Restless Years* in viewing terms.

It's reported that *Arcade* will not, like its predecessor, rely on explicit sex scenes and scandal to keep it moving.

It is, we're told, to be essentially a comedy.

As you would expect the continuing story will revolve around the shop owners who between them run a boutique, a jewellery shop, a health food shop, a gymnasium and a Chinese restaurant.

Mike Dorsey returns to a regular spot on TV as Vic Marshall, who manages a pin-ball parlour. He'd grown a beard for the part which should, hopefully, rid him of that *Number 96* "daddy" image. Lorrie Diamond is cast as Mothé Sparks, an effusive extrovert who runs a bookshop with her introvert sister Minnie, played by Peggy Toppiano, looking on.

As with all soap operas, set in an environment where characters can come and go, there should be work for many more actors and actresses — that's assuming, of course, that *Arcade* gets the required viewer response.

Ten won't know that until the first results of the ratings surveys are released.

THEATRE & FEMINISM FROM THEN TILL NOW

When *Betty Can Sleep* was staged at the Pram Factory in 1972, it was the first foray into women's theatre in Australia and marked the beginning of a new era of increasing involvement by women in theatre as actors, directors and writers, although it was another two years before the Women's Theatre Group (WTG) was formed in 1974. The impact of New Wave feminism on the arts in Australia led to an upsurge of theatre activity in Melbourne which was centred on the WTG, while in Sydney feminists became involved in filmmaking.

The reasons for this are obvious — feminism brings with it a critique of patriarchal society which is then applied to the prevailing situation, and in Melbourne in the early seventies a form of radical theatre had evolved and women were part of it. The advent of feminism meant that women were able to critically re-evaluate their role in it.

Feminism as a critical social theory was first articulated as practice via a via

theatre through the formation of the WTG. The cast of *Betty Can Sleep* had been drawn from the ranks of the Australian Performing Group, where the women were frustrated by the lack of significant, non-stereotypical roles available to them as actors, in the work of the male writers who were then writing for the APG.

When the WTG was formed its members included some APG women but the group was open and provided an opportunity for any interested women to participate. In fact many of the women who joined the WTG had had no previous theatre experience. Thus while the group was united by its commitment to feminism it was divided in its attitude to professionalism. However balancing the contradictory aims of process and product only became divisive in the later years when the group was safely established.

In the beginning when the group was unestablished, survival was a premium and all that mattered was

that women were working and learning, and that the show went on. As it was originally conceived the WTG aimed to open up theatre to more women by the learning and exchanging of theatre and technical skills, and to create a new depiction of women within a new form of theatre. During its existence the WTG was an agent of social, political and personal change, it disseminated ideas about theatre and feminism and provided a unique space and opportunity for women to work out many of the questions which feminism raised about theatre practice.

Between 1974 and 1976, the WTG staged more than ten shows in the Pram Factory as well as a number of street theatre and travelling shows in factories, shopping centres, at demonstrations and in schools. In the main, shows were developed through group improvisation and in workshops. Suitable pre-existing scripts by women writers were few and far between, although numerous

BY SUZANNE SPUNNER

efforts were made to search out scripts and encourage writers.

In 1975 during International Women's year when the group was at its most active stage, a season of three short plays was produced from scripts specially written for the group. However scripts derived from within the group were its mainstay, and thus provided a useful means of patterning the women who worked on a particular show.

By 1976 when the group had moved into their own theatre, *The Space*, in Paradise Street, Carlton, they had become a totally autonomous group, distinct from the Frim Factory and their main production that year, *Wonder Woman's Revenge* was distinguished by the fact that no APG women acted in it. However by the end of that year the group had declined as a viable force in the theatre community. In assessing the reasons for its demise it is difficult to separate the decline in interest in developing theatre/communicative skills from what had by then, become a separatist, internally self-justifying feminist ideology. The WTG pioneered experiments in non-scripted group devised performance, non-hierarchical group organisation; collective direction of productions and the breaking down of amateur/professional dichotomies in theatre. However these issues were also the cause of much friction and critical self-evaluation within the group. Ultimately these became the crucial dividing issues which sifted out of the

WTG those women who wished to pursue a form of separatist women's theatre, from those who wished to pursue feminism in the theatre world at large.

Nevertheless the WTG had a profound and lasting impact on theatre in Melbourne and it significantly contributed to a climate in which theatre made by and about the experiences of women became publically acceptable, even fashionable. So that by 1978 when the WTG, while not officially disbanded, was in a state of strategic withdrawal, women were more visible than they had ever been in the Melbourne theatre world. Everywhere you turned it seemed there were plays by and about women: *For Coloured Girls When The Rainbow Is Not Enough* was playing to packed houses at the Comedy Theatre and at Russell Street; *Papa Fish, Son and I* was playing to capacity audiences, while at La Mama *Savage Sepia*, a locally written, all

woman production, was also enjoying good houses and sympathetic reviews. By the end of the year two of the most successful shows staged by the APG were Kerry Dwyer's production of Fambender's *The River Years Of Patsy Fox* and Fay McKelown's production of Susan Griffin's *Power* — both Dwyer and McKelown had been members of the WTG and the acting and production credits for *The River Years*, read like a veritable roll call of ex Women's Theatre Group members.

In 1979 this trend continued and has been compounded by the emergence of a number of women as directors, most of whom have come out of the APG as a result of their policy last year to discriminate positively in favour of greater opportunities for women.

The Melbourne Theatre Company is not one to be left behind, and Judith Alexander, the director of Tributary productions began directing productions upstairs at The Athenaeum, while Nano Nagle has just recently been assistant director to



Patricia Kieran, writer in residence with La Mama in 1979.

John Sumner on Foster's *Arrabal*.

However, perhaps the most significant change this year has been the emergence of a number of women writers. It is significant because getting women to write for theatre, while it was always a primary aim of the WTC, was an ideal of the group that was never fully realised. In a recent interview, Dorothy Hewitt, the best known and most prolific women playwright in Australia, spoke about the difficulties facing women playwrights:

"If you think about women playwrights in English literature, generally, there's not very many of us. Take Alice who this year. Does it say that the whole mechanics of which plays are constructed are difficult for women? Does it say that they find it difficult to work within theatre structures? I think probably the answer is yes, that it is difficult to work because of the existing theatre structures and also maybe that intense co-operative effort is made difficult for women because of their past experiences and their attitudes."

Of the four women writers whose work was produced last year — Val Kewan, Jenny Kemp, Margot Hilton and Jan Cornell — only Kemp and Cornell expressly identify themselves as feminists. Kewan and Hilton are concerned to be seen as writers and not even the term "woman writer". Kewan has been writing and producing her own work at La Mama since 1974 and she has been write-in-residence there last year. Nevertheless her production in August of *The Art of Lobotomy Washing* in its exploration of sexual fantasy and its richly evocative visual style betrayed an interest in themes and images which are shared by feminist artists and writers. Both Margot Hilton's *Penelope's Wife* and Jenny Kemp's *Shirley Above* were one woman shows, which in stylistically very different ways explored the attitude of a contemporary "liberated" woman towards herself and her lovers. Both works had an unambiguous autobiographical reference and in the use of their own experience made over, the writer's concerns fall within the range of those articulated by the WTC.

Penelope's Wife was staged at The

Nimrod and according to John Wilton, it was "humbling and self-indulgent" while *Shirley Above* was staged in the Back Theatre of the Praeger Factory and directed by Kemp herself. Kemp has been working with the Studio Workshop for some years and like their work, *Shirley Above* is very much theatre by actors about the process of acting. Kemp described it as, "not a naturalistic play" but, "a study on observation of the rhythms of the female mind...The playwright is concerned with developing theatre which is expressing female creativity and which is liberated from pre-existing forms and structures." While Kemp does not claim *Shirley* as "her vision of theatre" she is, of the four



Carol Foster, *Virgin White* in *The Love Show*, Women's Theatre Group 1974. Photo: Micky Allen.

playwrights, the one most concerned with exploration of form and the attempt to forge new forms to delineate the specificity of women's experience.

As John Ronald said in the January issue of *The Frodo Magazine*, in an article entitled "On Not Being Treated As A Minority",

Second wave feminism will change theatre, in fact change art production of every sort...Would men vote for an institution that consistently continued to renege their sex? Change that and the place will come. The poem through a woman's will for them. We've looked into a time and a place. Very real cultural

movements have changed as here. The problem for women will be learning how to write for a theatre they've been looked out of.

This sense of being looked out of traditional theatre manifests itself in women's writing in a number of different ways and while it limits the possibilities open to them, it also frees up others. For instance the three act naturalistic, Williamsonian play has so far proved not to attract new women writers and this fact raises for me questions about the constraints of patriarchal form. On the other hand one-person monologues which allow unlimited interiorisation for the movement of the unconscious mind and support a non-naturalistic imaginative form of theatre are proving to offer exciting potential for women writers. Similarly poetry and song have been taken up with renewed vitality by women writers. Susan Griffin (*Povert*) and Nicola Stange (*For Colored Girls...*) are both poets and these plays are theatricalised poems.

In Australia, Dorothy Hewitt is the major women poet writing for theatre, but her work is as strong as theatre as it is poetry. Song has been the basis of two of the most successful shows by women this year — Robyn Archer's *A Star Is Born* and Jan Cornell's *Feeling In Love Again*. Archer used well known songs by legendary women singers which she strung together with a commentary on the lives of the women who made the songs their signature, to make a psychobiographical history of the female celebrity/performer. While Cornell wrote the happy four songs which constituted *Feeling In Love Again* around a critique of romantic love and early adolescent sexual liberation. The form of both of these shows was characteristic of much of the new feminist art in its fragmentation and allusive discontinuity.

Thus while there has been a considerable upsurge in women's writing in the past year a fully fledged female writer for theatre has not yet emerged, but this is hardly surprising when you consider that the roots of feminism and theatre in Melbourne were with the WTC which was a performer oriented rather than a writer oriented theatre.

THEATRE/ACT

Mediocre material

ONCE A CATHOLIC SHERLOCK HOLMES

By Kyle Wilson/State Rep.

Once A Catholic by Mary O'Malley. Fortune Theatre Company, The Playhouse, Canberra ACT. Opens 28 November 1979.

Director: Anne Godfrey-Smith. Design: Peter Harris. Music: Thomas Aquinas. Costume Designer: Marlene Pitt. Actors: Susan, Marlene Ross, Margaret de Meuse, Mary Mooney, Suzanne Ross, Mary McQuinn, Elizabeth Bradley, Mary Leighton, Helen Jones, Peter McQuinn, John Cuffe, Ed Emanuele, John Packer, David James Peters, Catherine Hamilton, Catherine Mary O'Grady, Ben Bell, Mary Hennessey, Shari Russell, Mary Murphy, Kerwin Harper, Mary Flanagan, John Hamilton.

(Professionally)

Sherlock Holmes adapted from Conan Doyle by William Gifford. Canberra Repertory Society at Theatre 3, Canberra ACT. Opens 1 December 1979.

Director: Ross MacGregor. Design: Russell Brown. Kim Beacher.

(Pro Am)

THIS unambitious choice of two renowned plays by Canberra's leading drama groups reflects the exigencies of theatre economics in the national capital. Fortune theatre, a semi-professional company working to a shoe-string budget, cannot afford to make a mistake in repertoire, and they know that the only plays that succeed financially in the Playhouse are of the light-weight entertainment type, usually innocuous and banal, that emphasise familiar aspects of life and affirm popular values. An infinitely finer play, Roger Poole's *Fernando*, superbly realised by Melbourne professionals, recently played to their house, but O'Malley's monogamy-ridden, simplistic and sentimental piece about parents up-and-downs in a Catholic girls' school, packed them in, justifying itself if only in economic terms.

Amazingly, it is no worse than unconvincing, a flimsy string of clichéd comic situations acted out by crude stereotypes. O'Malley shows the surface of the school's daily routine, seldom even attempting to penetrate the skins of its denizens, even when she does so she flounders, as in the case of Emanuele the foreign music teacher, who talks funny. With him there is at least an attempt at symbolism his rotting, smelly leg apparently expressing something about his soul. O'Malley simply doesn't have that ability to dig into a character, to create a coherent psychological identity as Ross Becher did so successfully in *The Christmas Brother*. The

plays are similar in setting, their humour is based on the same tension between Catholic mores and popular reality, but Becher achieves poignancy and probability, because his character has psychological depth. A last-minute and unacknowledged production by Anne Godfrey-Smith and some stiffly judged underplaying by the remarkable John Cuffe as Father Mullarkey and Tamara Ross as Mary Mooney didn't succeed in reconstructing this stillborn, highly forgettable play.

It remains a tragedy that one man can make or break a theatre — its director. Since it lost Ross MacGregor, Canberra Repertory Society has been searching for just such a creator, finally settling on Kim Beacher, whose occasional debut has been eagerly awaited. His choice of play was unimaging, for good reason: such as William Gifford's *Holmes* *Just Again*, in which all characters and situations are so familiar to us that there can be no tension-generated suspense, present particular problems, especially when the audience's feeling for the period has been conditioned and refined by innumerable films and British television series.

Obviously a fresh and imaginative approach is required. Beacher attempted this by presenting the material in a non-

trickery, melodramatic fashion, scrupulously avoided clichéd devices and cheap laughs. Alas, this was insufficient, the three fine performances by Jan Smith as Helen Helen Nald as the French maid and Bill Gossage as Moriarty's henchman, revealed that acting of a very high standard is required if these stereotypes are to grip us. Further, the approach proved that as the audience desired to be expected to take the cops-and-robbers ritual seriously, only a high degree of stylisation, of bold strokes and theatricality will enhance such mediocre material. Pace was lacking, undermined by a too-fussy set, sluggish music on-stage and inefficient set-changing.

The neo-realistic set and lighting rubbed even the murder scenes of any real suspense, again reducing this a far better, overly theatrical approach is diminished the work and graphic effects of the German expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and David Lean's *Oliver Twist* spring to mind. It would be unfair to judge Beacher's potential on the basis of one production, particularly as the broad, open stage of Theatre 3 is notoriously difficult to use, but one hopes that future productions will be marked by the degree of imagination that obviously informs his repertoire policy.



Tamara Ross (Mary Mooney) and John Cuffe (Father Mullarkey) in Fortune's *Once A Catholic*.

THEATRE/NSW



State Rep./Lucy Wagner

An ideal choice

THE SUNNY SOUTH

By Harry O'Connor

The Opera House Drama Theatre Sydney Opera House, January 14 1989: the first night in the life of the new Sydney Theatre Company. We're waiting for George Durrell's *The Sunny South* to begin. Expectations are high. This Anglo-Australian melodrama has been billed as "yolking" (I quote from the puff), and with the Playright's *On Our Selection* and *The Firestone* twice similarly in the air, everyone is ready for the best in Australian ramblous theatre.

But what's this lights but no sound? A curtain rising at a lateral pace? A small triangular patching of the front cloth, peering, perhaps a cancellation of the whole idea? Is this the "grand and vulgar" (I quote from the Company's manifesto) theatre promised by director Richard Wherrett? No.

Ricked and rapture, out steps Ruth Cracknell, the doyenne of Australian theatre, to give an ice-breaking prologue by David Williamson which was over the audience at once, successfully launching a company weighed down with all our hopes and fears. A new touch.

In 1921, when Durrell died a young poet's death at 71 old Dec Why beach, "a link with the old colonial days of the Australian stage" had been broken, obtained the *Southern Morning Herald*. The STC has relunged that link, and introduced us to a part of Australian theatre history we should all know about. *The Sunny South* was first performed in 1883 and enjoyed a busy stage history both here and in London, where it was last

revived in 1939. The comedy, extravagant characters and spectacle make it a play worth reviving for the 1980's, when we are all pondering where we're going. *The Sunny South* lyricistically reminds us why our ancestors and our producers came here in the first place.

It's a big play staged in a big way with no apologies, and except for some initial plodding exposition, *Sunny South* really gets going after we leave England's wooden halls for the Australian goldfields, where the third, fourth and fifth acts are spent — among the New Chums, diggers, bushrangers and other wild colonial types. The 1880's were ones of quick fortunes, petty explosions and a mixed, mostly immigrant population which expressed fierce loyalty to the Crown. Immigrants bowed: in fact, the show stopper of the night was the poignant condition of these old yenge-pengles. "Bretons, Savoy, No-o-o-o-ver, shall be slaves", and "God Save the Queen". Arriving musical arrangements from Terence Clarke.

The goldrushes hold out hope for the Charter family honour. When we last saw the Charters (Acts I and II), they were in danger of losing their family seat, name, and only daughter Clarie, beautifully played by Geraldine Turner. Eli Grop is

and abductions that ensue.

The final showdown (there's no equivalent in the local vernacular, is there?) between Matt and Duggan is a fantastic coup de theatre, spontaneously applauded, when a full-size, living steam locomotive trundles on stage. Good and Evil lay on each other splendidly, with all the savagery of these old rugged westerns, and well you know who wins.

Richard Wherrett directs with the right amount of candour and wit, so that neither actor nor audience is embarrassed by the obviousness of the melodramatic form. Just the latest amount of tongue-in-cheekness, of boldness where necessary. Stylized characterisations work well for Ronald Falk's Protagonist Sordell, Janet Finner Rebecca Hains, Lynette Curran's Bubs (dead-on-the-field) Berkley and John Allen's Perfidy Prince Anglar and exaggerated movements help the actors to capture character and reduce the over-the-top Drama Theatre stage to playable proportions. Peter Carroll's Boi Curran, the open-hearted New Chum who is always willing to have a go, is a magnificent creation. Controlled, clever and compelling, Carroll's presence is always angular on a stage which boasts a proud ensemble.



Ruth Cracknell and Geraldine Turner in *The Sunny South*. Photo: Peter Molloy/Press

devilish villain by Robin Ramsay) makes to foreclose when hope arrives in Matt Morley (John Hargreaves' golden-haired, Anglo-Australian hero) from the Australians, where he's been buying blacks and digging up nuggets. A timely telegram announces salvation in gold, so off they all go, villains and all in different guises. Old grudges and New Chums meet in the diggings where we also encounter a new villain Dick Duggan, nastiest director John Gaden's hilarious ball-dog bushranger, who is behind the robbery

Much of this production's magic, too, comes down to Robinson's acting, which are both remarkable as an act and in the way they change before your eyes as they were historically expected to do. The bushrangers' westerns last, together with its atmospheric sound effects and lighting. Clery Lulek is absolutely wonderful.

Sunny South is an ideal choice for a company which promises to bring vigorous and exciting theatre to its audiences. It engages well for theatre in the city and for the STC.

Brought home with force

KNUCKLE

By Tony Barclay

Ascribed by David Hare: Excellent Theatre Sydney
 NSW: Dropped 10th December, 1978
 Director: Jon Ewing. Designer: Tom Buchanan.
 Curly: Deliafield. Paul Mason: Jenny Wilbur. Patrick:
 Gibbons. Gary Dunning, Anne E Morgan: Patrick:
 Deliafield. Stanley Walsh: Max Dupree. Frank J:
 Gallagher. Herman: John Wilson. Katherine J:
 Stevenson. Stephen: Spencer. Peter: Simon Page.
 (Continued)

"I come to England maybe once a year. It's a shabby trade (said delighted with itself)." reflects the very cool Curly Deliafield in David Hare's *Knuckle*. And while we are more inclined to Curly's view of things, he does not speak down from any moral pulpit for he is well and truly stamped in the mould of a Mackey Spillane anti-hero. Cosmopolitan, mercenary, gun supplier, spy and ugly, yet cool and attractive, Curly has romantically and sexually with Jenny Wilbur, the only girl worth attention. (Yes, he's been told Curly is a master of rapid fire one-liners, laced with ringing comment, yet he is unimpressed (Jenny) as he is rough odds (with his father, Patrick, or Max Dupree).

When younger he roared along with the anarchistic rebuff of a punk rocker. He apparently posed in a bottle and sold it as cocaine ("I sold like a bomb") and whenever he stood up there were two greasy patches on the seat of his chair. Displaced youthful energy has become calculated, careful exploitation in a brief career where Hare explicitly draws our attention to Curly's gun-running. Curly is now drawn towards the power of the Establishment, relatively free of its double-standards, because he has learnt the quality of self-control that his reputed ancestor ("I came back because I'm ready" comments with a precise irony on his self-sensuousness, Curly's taught in a blind and ultimately his philosophy could be don't pass in the world, one day you may want to drink from it).

It is the relative complexities of Curly that make David Hare's writing an interesting. Curly is pitted against a society which, with the singular exception of Jenny Wilbur, is both antagonistic and uncomprehending.

It is through Curly that Hare is able to lift the face and essence of English society, or, to put it Curly's way, to lay "people on top of people like layers of lasagne". Here is very much a sensitive writer and he works in the company of Brecht, Galsworthy and Catherall (with whom he co-authored *Drunk*, 1976). He shares a

definite stance with such writers but I find him more complex and, in some senses, less compromising.

Here is very much of the post-war generation, reviewing the life as a waitlisted for England — say the Suez crisis, with which colonisation has Piers. Moral ethics and cultural entropy cannot be lodged or rationalised, it's out in the open, rule Britannia is out of bounds to its children. England, especially the square mile of the city of London, is a jumble of corruption and lunatic beauty the



Paul Mason (Curly) and Stanley Walsh (Patrick) on the set of *Knuckle*

trappings of great traditions, the "more rigid the obvious geometry below". I do not mean to imply that Hare departs from the moral complexities of a Pinter, Stoppard or O'Brien in more questions of style that make his work slick yet confronting, entertaining yet demanding.

Hare's is a dramatic language of, for want of a better word, "news" or more recent ideas and consequently shales in its perspective of time and concern. Michael Coveney remarked of *Families* that it was the nearest any English contemporary playwright "has come to emulating Brecht". In *Knuckle* it is the theme of the ill-gate movie, the slick, rapid usage of pay that Hare employs to slice apart a society run by profit motive. If G E Moore is quoted in favour of Mackey Spillane it is not an unconsidered injection, it is a choice of ironic weaponry. Hare is morally complex but he is not a moralizer and one suspects he endorses, if not with the same fervour, the resolution implicit in Curly's statement "but my hole would called honesty. It cannot help us now. There are no excuses left".

In *Knuckle*, Curly has returned in his birthplace of Guilford, after an absence of fifteen years, to investigate the disappearance of Sarah, his wife (but this becomes more a personal odyssey as Curly moves about Guilford focusing his attention on Jenny (judiciously named) Shadow of the Moon Club. The plot itself is fairly slight and even the most barren and obscure details are not intended to distract us from the more Hare cares

In the production Tom Buchanan has put together a set that neatly copes with some intractable scene changes. A small resolve encompasses both the Shadow of the Moon Club and Patrick's house, while the larger stage area, grey and edged with stylized rubble, is used for general locations. We get clearly the sense of Guilford's demise since the "golden" days of the town.

Director Jon Ewing asks the set to good effect to handle the slick scene changes called for by the text. Indeed the flow of scene links is more often to television than stage but there's a point in that too. *Knuckle* requires considerable audience concentration and that concentration should not be blunted by its sleek theatrical surface, a point made astutely by the English critic Michael Billington, contra several local critics.

Ewing's production gave great attention to detail and ideas with some care and flair. The production played well clear of any tendency towards self-indulgence, something that can be all too tempting with a play of this kind. My only qualms concern occasional repeated blocking and one or two dramatic points too underplayed; I find more trouble in the script than I found coming from the stage. The matter of dramatic pitch is purely interpretational, but to me the play's final scene was slightly underplayed, in its initial and middle stages. But these remain qualms.

Paul Mason's Curly was excellent. He attracted the many and Curly with sustained and concentrated intelligence, the cool, the problem wit, the concealed "sensitivity" — we shall find for someone who is on stage for almost the entire play. Patrick Gibbons, apart from some vocal awkwardness, provided a perfect foil as Jenny's natural and aware, yet the only real survivor of Guilford past. Indeed, the production generally moved with neatly understated firmness around their relationship. The other important relationship — Curly and his father Patrick, that is, Curly's relationship to his past and to the Establishment — worked with power. Stanley Walsh mastered the very difficult part, especially in the play's second act, of Patrick, who is motivated by profit while he catalogues Henry James or reads mass stories: the complete double standard. Walsh was aided in this by Anne E Morgan's masterly Mrs Dunning and the suggested odd, if pathetic, annual comfort they enjoy. Patrick Gallagher's Max Dupree rounded off this well cast production. Dupree, subdued yet vibrant, was a sympathetic, crafted by his sense of the past.

Knuckle is a disarming play and Ewing's production brought this home with force.

Definitely Treasurable

PIRATES AT THE BARN

By Norman Russell

Pirates At The Barn by Eleanor Wicomb's National Theatre and Festival of Sydney Clark Island, Sydney Harbour. Opened January 8, 1980. Director: Neil Armfield. Design: Wendy Wilson. Stage Manager: Margie Wright. Extras: Emma Le May, Amelia, Canada, Maggie, Kirkpatrick, Samuel Scroble, Paul Bettman, Black Bell Blaster, Brian Black, Micky, Les, Baskery, George, Michael, Tony Barker, The Stranger, Simon Barker, Sergeant, Samuel Newman, sailors, Stuart Campbell, Peter Baker. (Professionals)

After cancelling Clark Island in Sydney Harbour during previous holiday seasons, Jim Hawkins, Long John Silver and his band of cut-throats were "resting" this year, but meanwhile, "on another part of the island" to borrow Shakespeare's

stage direction for Act II of *The Tempest* — the National Theatre and the Festival of Sydney were presenting splendid "whitewash" theatre with another parade of pirates.

This time it was Eleanor Wicomb's *Pirates at the Barn*, first of her famous plays for children and as fresh and pleasing today as when first presented in Mossman Town Hall in 1948. Since then it has been staged scores of times, both here and overseas, the most recent in Sydney being at the New Theatre in January, 1978.

For this, probably first, outdoor production, it was especially rewritten by the author's sister, on an actual historical happening in which Australian children discovered pirates in Sydney Harbour, it is great fun, rich in the clowning, slapstick comedy and audience participation to beloved by children.

This was all most skilfully exploited by fast-moving young director Neil Armfield, whose deft movements, both in incident and characterisation, was a constant delight.

The chosen new site of the island was ideal, a natural, enclosed amphitheatre

comfortably accommodating the 300 to which each audience was limited.

A much more compact production than Ken Harker's *Treasure Island* of happy memory, all the scenes took place on a spacious, elaborate and solidly constructed stage supporting a couple of four-square structures, the two-story barn and Amelia Scroble's boarding house. The barn, adorned with such "gold" as "There is not now and there never was any treasure here" and "Definitely No Treasure", served effectively for much business, chasing round and round with the audience yelling traditional warning each time Black Bell Blaster gave an eight.

Added thrills and excitement were provided by characters climbing up and sliding down a pulley rope from the upper floor of the barn, while in the five-for-all finale the young hero, Michael, escaped through a trap in the roof.

Having lost six shows through rain, the excellent cast was battling a bit for cohesion at the performance caught, but there was no lack of pace and energy. Tony Taylor and Louise Le May paired beautifully as the youngsters, Michael and Kathy, hoping to find the pirate's gold so they could get away to Sydney. Brian Black, who joined the company as a late replacement, was a toweringly dark and menacing Black Bell Magger Kirkpatrick, prodigiously padded, clowned delightfully as Amelia Scroble and soon had the kids, not to mention the adults, echoing her lures in a running gag about "working her fingers to the bone".

Sublime performance came from Paul Bettman as the vain and dandified Samuel Scroble, a gloriously comical characterisation some aspects of which undoubtedly echoed the ladies. But here it an actor to watch, who will be possible this year because for 1980 it turned later that because performances run half an hour over time, the director cut bits of the exchanges between Mr and Mrs Scroble, the wit and puns of which were not registering with the children anyway. There will be no record of a planned one-off adult performance is eventually staged.

Simon Burke looked good as the varnished despotic Stranger, but despite his fine success and a pleasing performance last year as Jim Hawkins, he seems unlikely to have much to learn about stagecraft and poise.

An interesting feature of these island shows, almost certainly not duplicated anywhere else in the world, is to see the number of children accompanied by obviously doting grandparents. I was told also of the many older generations who came along, just for the pleasure of watching the children's enjoyment — a pleasure shared by your reviewer.



Paul Bettman and Tony Taylor in National's "Pirates at the Barn" — Photo: John Delaney

THEATRE/NT

Ludicrissimo!

SCAPINO

By Alan Youngson

Scapino by Molère. Adapted by Frank Ford and Robert Kember. Darwin Theatre Group. Darwin NT. Opened November 26th 1991.
Director: Robert Kember. Designer: Peter Dean. Support: Ken Conway.
(Pp. 104)

What do you get when you transpose a 17th century French comedy, *The Tricks of Scapino* to a 20th century Italian café? The answer is a LUDICRISSIMO SCAPINO!

If a comedy best operates in that middle zone between the serious and the absurd or, as Aristotle defined it, the "ludicrous", then Darwin Theatre Group's updated adaptation of *Scapino* vibrates with the energy and life of that humorous spirit.

Director Robert Kember cleverly modernises the characters and incidents of Commedia dell'arte to impress and amuse the fisher street theatre with its 1920's restaurants, Neapolitan love songs, comestants singing, dancing, fun and games. Undoubtedly, Molère would have applauded this adaptation since he sought the same spirit for his entertainments.

That lively atmosphere encompasses the audience the moment they enter the washing-lined Neapolitan Sidewalk Café, beautifully designed and executed by Peter Dean. This spry spirit is developed by "Godfather" Argante's flamboyant introduction of the Scapino's family and troupe which leave the audience in no doubt that the ensuing far-fetched plot of thwarted lovers, the bawdy carryings-on of tyrannical and small-minded fathers and the scheming antics of *Scapino* will all end happily ever after.

In the difficult double-acting role of *Scapino*, Ken Conway works very hard at making the contrived tricks seem spontaneous and is most successful at changing scenes in the farcical music cover. However, he has not yet thoroughly acquired the light rakish touch that would endear him to audiences.

The outraged fathers, portrayed by Peter Daxon and Simon Hopkinson are well constructed, consistently witty but don't rise much above caricature. On the other hand, Colin Jacobson and Maryann

Frystock, as the lovers, strive quite successfully in giving their stock characters a three dimensional quality. But the most authentic emotion is Marilynne Hangan's sadistic long-lost gypsy daughter, Zerbinetta.

However, what ensures the enjoyment of the audience and their willing participation in *'That's Amore'* is the energy and excitement which flows from crystalline of the cast in the musical numbers, chase

sequences, and emotional family pleadings.

This spirit of comedy celebrates our capacity not only to endure our tragic fate (in Darwin), but to overcome it with energy and endurance. It is these two qualities which earmark Bob Kember's sixth and final production for Darwin Theatre Group which he has blended performers of varying talents into a harmonious and exhilarating ensemble.



Darwin Theatre Group's *Scapino*. Photo: Gilbert Reynolds

THEATRE/SA



State Rep./Susan Yild

Australian Drama Festival

Troupe at the Red Shed, La Mama.
Italian Folk Ensemble, Theatre 63.

By Susan Yild

Perhaps I expected too much from Troupe's Festival contribution, a group-written play on the problems of aging in Australia. Rather than shake the complacency of a society which allows its aged to wither away, unnoticed and unheard, *What Day Is It? Who Is The Drive Afternoon?* served instead to reinforce and finally depend on the very clichés it purported to expose.

Confining by a thin plot-line, stereotyped characters and loose construction, the play didn't begin to confront the issues, preferring to settle for predictable situations and surprisingly simplistic solutions. The actors could do little to flesh out their roles. Paula Carter, as the central figure, was the exception. Acting with the pain of humanity, she was most moving in moments of quiet understatement. But overall, the lack of depth and inventiveness was more than disappointing.

Far more theatrically powerful and intellectually exciting is Roger Pulver's play, *Japanese*. Directed by Bruno Katz at La Mama, it gained from the intimacy of the small end-on theatre where the dimensions of stage and auditorium together are no greater than the classroom in which the action is set.

The play's several levels allow the author to comment specifically on American-Japanese relations before, during and since

World War Two, but its special strength is the fusion of these levels in fantasy and an energetic violence which denounces and implicates the grotesquerie of Japan everywhere. Jim Daly as Chien and Tony Alison as the Janner had opted for different styles of acting, nonetheless, their interplay showed no signs of strain.

Interplay and unity of purpose characterised another evening of strong emotions and some poignancy at Theatre 63. The Italian Folk Ensemble held an important place in the Festival as the one representative of Australia's ethnic communities. *Peuvre Mio Ti Fughe Arrichere* (*Dear Mom, I Want To Make You Rich*) was a collection of work chants, prose statements, and social and political songs, performed entirely in

Italian, with a view to acknowledging the significance of popular culture in the lives of Italians. A programme of fervour and seriousness, reaching all laughter and tears.

In addition, there were play-readings to attend, besides street happenings, pub shows, youth theatre, radio drama and a Forum. A veritable feast?

If to include several world and State premieres it is so, indeed, then the first Australian Drama Festival was a success. If to attract companies and personalities from interstate it to succeed then, again, success. If to achieve spontaneous offerings in Australian drama from most of the leading theatre groups in Adelaide it to succeed, then, once again, success.

But if to produce quantity it is to tempt



Jim Daly, Tony Alison and Paula Carter in "Japanese" at La Mama

enthusiasm with frustration at small houses, then success is more doubtful. Adelaide is not a large city. It can accommodate the biennial Festival of Arts and the Children's Festival. Come that, in off-Festival years. But to expect backing on a large scale at a time of year when audiences are at any cost low is asking the theatre-going public to spread itself too thinly.

Perhaps the organisers should rethink their support for Australian theatre other along the lines suggested at the Forum: that capital cities host the Festival in one or else by instigating something like an "Australian Play of the Month" scheme where publicity and funding would be given to one group at a time, enabling them to take risks with Australian drama (new or old) which might otherwise not be performed. This would maintain a centred focus on Australian drama itself, at the same time, largely eliminate the situation where simultaneous shows

prevent participants from seeing each other's work.

Theatre Guild, Little Theatre Panorama Players, Theatre 62 (Adelaide)

by Harold Minor

The Australian Drama Festival included two revivals of "period" plays. Peter Kenna's *The Slaughter of St Teresa's Day* emerged as a fine piece of Australian theatre in an excellent performance by Adelaide University's Theatre Guild. Joe Vidi directed a first-class cast with sensitivity and an appreciation of the period; there was an acceptable blend of sentiment and gutsy Australian humour.

The play's central character, Gola Magari, was played with great strength

and perception by Jo Peoples. She was more than ably assisted by a very real Aussie Esau played by Jean Raby. The best scenes in this outstanding production were those between these two actresses. However, the rest of the cast gave admirable support.

Betty Roland's *The Touch of Sol* has aged remarkably well. The theme of a migrant's loneliness and frustration is as powerful now as it was fifty years ago when the play was first staged.

Michael Baldwin's direction allowed the Panorama Players to get dangerously close to sleep upon awakening at times. However, the style of writing and some melodramatic elements contributed to this. Overall it emerged as a thoroughly entertaining piece of vintage Australian theatre and acting hopefuls must go to Elaine Sharpe and Brian Koon. Betty Roland, now 76 and present at the first night, must be justly proud that her play was included at the Festival.



Jean Raby and Jo Peoples in Theatre Guild's "Slaughter of St Teresa's Day" Photo: Corrie Atkinson



CONTROLLER OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
Queensland Performing Arts Complex,
Brisbane

The Complex will consist of a 1,000 seat theatre, a 1,000 seat Lyric Theatre for Opera, Music, Dance, and a 2,000 seat Experimental Theatre. All venues are scheduled to complete in 1982.

The Controller of Technical Services will be responsible to the Director of the Complex for all aspects of technical management.

The applicant will have a record of successful technical management or experience in the area of professional theatre. Salary will include superannuation.

FINANCIAL CONTROL
Technical service budgets, including the preparation of estimates for financial advice on costs, contracts, property, personnel and material value of technical equipment.

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Preparation of comprehensive work schedules for technical staff, maintenance of stock and equipment control systems, layout of stage and rooms, technical staff training and development.

PRODUCTION COORDINATION

Library of production production literature is continuously processed lighting production.

SALES

Library with staff access, recommending a high level of knowledge of relevant industry of theatre.

Salary will be commensurate with 1981 rates and will include superannuation. An eligible applicant can be made for entry to an appropriate superannuation scheme.

Responsible transfer of the applicant and family to Brisbane will be met by the Queensland Performing Arts Trust.

Interested persons should apply to:

Director, Queensland Performing Arts Trust
P.O. Box 135, North Quay, Brisbane, Qld. 4000

The closing date for applications will be 15 February 1980



**THE PERFORMING ARTS
BOOKSHOP**

232 Castlereagh Street,
Sydney, 2000.
Telephone: Patrick Carr
(02) 233 1658



SHOPFRONT

PRESENTS

YOUTH THEATRE SHOWCASE
1980
subscription season.



THE SHOPFRONT SEASON WILL INCLUDE SUBSIDIES TO THE YOUTH THEATRE PRESENTED BY YOUTH THEATRE, USING HOSPITALITY'S LARGEST YOUTH THEATRE AS A BASE FOR PRODUCTIONS AND EVENTS BY SHOPFRONT AIDS AND VISITING YOUTH THEATRE AND THEATRE-EDUCATION GROUPS.

ALICE PRODUCTIONS

by visiting companies is by Shopfront. It features a play written by young people, programmed plays, dance, and a host of others.

ORESTES

proper shows.

CHILDREN

are created by kids.

are to show.

4th NATIONAL YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS WEEKEND

GROUP

of plays, with production assistance by the (actor of blood) Director and by the Radio Light Company.

From
1st MARCH, 1980
To
14th DECEMBER, '80.

Plans directed by kids.

FOR TALK PLAYS

Subscribers can choose to attend as many events as they like from over 25 shows & other happenings.

SEASON SUBSCRIPTIONS

122 SINGLE, \$45 FAMILY.

\$12 CONCESSION (students, kids, unemployed, pensioners).



Visiting Companies

from the National Theatre, including DISTRICT THEATRE COMPANY, a group of young people, and a group of young people.

TO SUBSCRIBE OR FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

The Shopfront Theatre for Young People

Co-op Ltd

50 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000
Telephone: (02) 233 1658



THEATRE/TAS

On the pulse

GIMME SHELTER

By Ken Kelsie

Gimme Shelter by, Bruce Knell's Salamandra Theatre Company, Riverside Theatre, Hobart, Tas Opened November 30, 1990

Director: Richard Manning

Cast: Michael Cummings, Allen Harvey, Isla Long, David O'Connor, Peggy Wallace, Liddy Wharrell and Ben Whinger
(Professional)

Why call a trilogy of plays *Gimme Shelter*? As they say in the symposium these who are up to what's going down, down where Harrie Knell is coming from. They are already well to the marrow of the title.

The unstated subject will confirm that performance about young people oppressed by the rock culture scene and its implications.

Gimme and *Goonie* initially two separate plays form with *Goonie* the trilogy *Gimme Shelter*. The pivotal character Kid, originally realised by Ben Whinger, from the central piece *Goonie* for mostly by chance the characters from *Goonie* in the final segment *Goonie* which Knell directed for the Solihull Poly Theatre, Clifton, London in 1977. The strengths of this trilogy, in the writing and performance, come from the evolving workshop nature of its inception.

Goonie Shelter works for two important reasons. Firstly by presenting two separate situations in *Goonie* and *Goonie* and at the end by commenting upon what has transpired in the lives of the characters, who at the outset are either at the end of schooling or the beginning of their working life the audience are able to approach a common theme from several directions. It is a good theatrical device. The trilogy, conceals the potential we are making new characters and are intrigued to see what happens when situations combine. But the double perspective leaves us in no doubt.

Like a ground swell we feel it, a profound and perhaps insoluble dilemma confronting youthful populations in a world where political economic social and most particularly educational strategies are incapable of fulfilling the very expectations they engender. There is a remarkable effort in the performance and in the Salamandra Company presentation an especially powerful second part, evoking the failed school leaver who threatens to ignore the petrol tank of his

motorcycle while holding to his principal and two teachers hostage, sent reprobations back through what we have seen and forward into the concluding sequence. The clear desperation of *Goonie* becomes relevant to the last dramatic daily round of *Goonie* and, by extension, the situation we see youth in today.

The second reason the Salamandra performance was successful was that the company were at a point where such a play was exactly right. And their judgement to present it matches Knell's reasons for writing it. I was excited to see theatre arising from the experience of working close to the pulse of society. It's not just to do with matters of job opportunity though Tasmania is in a more parlous position than perhaps any other Australian area. But has to do with a small company after a grueling year face to face with youthful audiences, being unable to block their ears to a very clear cry. I believe mainstream theatre has a lot to learn from the experience of travelling youth theatre in this country. When actors get the chance to "speak to their tribe", they are fulfilling one of drama's greatest functions. In this case, the Salamandra Theatre's director, Barbara Manning, *Goonie Shelter*'s director Richard Meredith and the cast have been listening carefully and their judgement was spot on.

The highlights of performance for me

were in *Goonie* and the concluding piece *Goonie* where I felt the cast were really shaking their wings. Ian Long as the young worker Ray caught between the class he was born into and the one his education has conditioned him to, Allen Harvey as the headmaster, not only out of touch with his students and their world but more frighteningly, actually despising him for his sheer presence in a system that simply confirms the status quo, and Les Whinger, the distressed youth Kid, were memorable. I was also impressed by David O'Connor's interpretation of the physical education master — I have met that sort of violence in our high schools, often noted, but unnameable. Michael Cummings, Liddy Wharrell — whom I believe had the hardest character to handle and was aided by writing that was unable to retain a Knell as well as the male characters and Peggy Wallace, all gave good performances which gained strength as the play progressed.

The audience realised they had attended a piece of theatre with very relevant implications. In a smaller community like Hobart, where at times there is a tendency to avoid anything too close to home, *Goonie Shelter* could have been discreetly ignored. It wasn't and for me was a heartening indication that now is the time for theatre to go to the market place. It can only command the work of the Salamandra Theatre Company.



Ben Whinger as Kid in the *Goonie* segment of Salamandra's *Gimme Shelter*

THEATRE/VIC



State Rep. Barbara Spunner

Production makes up for content

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99

Do You Need a Second Opinion?

Condolella is performed with music by John and Frank, by Frank Haven. Presented by the Melba Theatre Company. Admission Theatre, Melbourne, Vic. Opened 24 December 1979 after 3 previews.
Director: Frank Haven. Design: Peter Alward.
Choreographer: Elaine Hiss. Musical Director:

Recent Arrivals: Robert Carson
1. *Johnny* by Scott Turow, Putnam, \$22.95
2. *Impassioned Paradise* by G. J. Meyer, Knopf, \$22.95
3. *Harmony* by Daniel Brown, Warner, \$22.95
4. *Chances* by John L'Heureux, Random House, \$22.95
5. *My Sister Sam* by Lisa Klein, Warner, \$22.95
6. *One Day in November* by Michael Crichton, Knopf, \$22.95
7. *Conversations* by Sandy Kane, Warner, \$22.95
8. *Shirley* by Judith Kesteven, Knopf, \$22.95
9. *Woman Power* by Susan R. Jones, Knopf, \$22.95
10. *Ammonite* by John Nathan, Knopf, \$22.95
11. *Against My Will* by Daniel Silva, Warner, \$22.95
12. *Down the River* by Peter Brown, Knopf, \$22.95
13. *Walls* by Michael Crichton, Warner, \$22.95
14. *Return to the Paradise* by Michael Tegen.

"When the MTC broke new ground by including a pantomime in its subscription series and culturally assumed, since most of its subscribers are adults, it would be an adult pantomime. Had the attention been on attract the big, low audience we'd imagined a special production would be mounted playing mornings and afternoons. And when news leaked out that Noel Fomer and Frederick Fawcett were cast as the Light Niners, not a possibility for seeing an adult pantomime, well, it and only it, was not.

But not so. It actually is possible to be a woman and to be the perpetrator of a violent act and the recognized winner of a national award.

evening end of the stage barrier aimed at children plus the occasional communal participation.

Plotwise Hauser has come up with an above-average original conception. We great differentiation between the two High Tapers — Elvira the sly old witch and villainous, Coruscopius influenced by her secret but actually possessing a heart of gold — they are not the usual stereotypes. The Baron also takes on more challenges by being a World War II veteran sort of character.

There is an additional character in *Guards*, the Princess Urdak, who stands in uniform the threat if his empire does not marry before a prescribed time. And confusion is broken by having an actor (in this case David Downton) play Prince Charmant as a reference to a better past.

This could have been a first class performance with some really good dialogue clever wit and nothing good from the film, the dialogue is very ordinary, the wit not very original and frequently when consisting of local topical references, falling very flat. The music is most unimpressive.

Although something may be lacking in the pastor's content, Hauser has made up for that by providing a sparkling production and a first rate cast that in many ways could hardly be bettered. *Sam and Kate* may be another year and a half in the making, but it is certainly worth the wait.

student reg. fees might provide the key as often as
as a classical handbook

One can hardly imagine Innere Upland Sinters than those of Parlow and Perrow. One hath certain that later in the season they will be outrageously old looking and introducing stage business of their own that will be absolutely hilarious. In the evening's best segment — a send-up of Western movies — Parlow's impersonation of a saloon singer is a Detroit is nothing short of brilliant (so much more convincing than Darlow in *Rue or Glorious Reynolds* crust-crust-up). And it is doubtful if there is a naturally lazier man in Australia than Perrow.

Not far behind this talented couple is Jonathan Hardy as Gumbo, the cynical and most evil of villains. Full of tricks and eye-brow wiggles, he is one of Hardy's best characterizations. The Buttons of Gary, Down is also a stand-out, bordering on a cameo, but personally, similarly the Baron of David Ravenwood. On several occasions, though, Down seems about to lift the roof off with a song but then Houser lets him down badly with the material which results in the number simply not being cut.

A pity there could not have been two editions of this party: the private one to play maudlin and another, largely rewritten by Farmer and Parlow to play evening. In the same it should prove a most popular attraction.



Downloaded from www.jstor.org/stable/2346092 on Tue, 20 Jun 2017 12:02:02 UTC

Pursuit of avant garde

END TO END COUNTERSPACES

By Catherine Peake

End To End by Douglass (produced by Daniel Productions at La Mama Theatre) Opened December 1979

Cost: George Dixon, Screen: John Russell (After Doug)

Counterspaces by Daniel Kahane, director: Daniel Kahane, music: Geoffrey Burdett, and Ben Kahane (premiered at La Mama Theatre) Opened December 1979 at La Mama Theatre

Supporting members: Ben Burge, Douglas, Sam Kerr, Josephine Baker, movement and John Rhonda, Daniel Dixon, Mary Wilson, multi-media poetry quartet: Ben Dixon, Martin Kraljic, Daniel Kahane, Josephine Baker

(After Doug)

The link between these two plays is their conscious pursuit of an avant garde theatre. They are accompanied by a small booklet of programmatic notes, mostly pertinent to the second play, which makes much ado about the scope of performance art, and multi-lingual sound poetry.

The first, *End To End*, by Doug Dixon (whose characters were also produced in tandem with Kahane's *Kisses and Cries* in February 1979), announces itself as a species of the Theatre of the Absurd right from the first line:

It is a closely charmed, sometimes ironic examination of the marriage between Carl and Seren. But the relationship is mostly abstract, rhetorical and seriously engaging. As each attempts to prod the other into an awareness of separate realities they wander on all kinds of philosophical reefs and misunderstandings.

He wants to "flaunt" her "with the images that flow from my mind". She is more unimpressed and at one point laments that there is no "place for love's dividers". Finally she goes home to the bath tub and the play ends. But *End To End* is not all rhetoric.

Some of the play's action-centred bits are able, to convey the world of hermetically sealed, the sense that this "play" has been performed many times before with small variations and that its highs, lows and revolutions are to some extent predetermined on both sides.

The performances of George Dixon and John Russell do credit to the rather bleak, concerned script and together they manage to keep a semblance of ironic humour through the dialogue. Dixon's Carl is and is not a man whose boundaries remain and with small variations, as he moves through a repertoire of restrained, cynical



George Dixon/Garfield for Dixon: End to End

and concern for his wife's welfare.

Lola Russell is herself a probably stronger when she is playing victim, than when she is aggressor. Her character is slightly blousy and confused, a nervous rebel and the possessor of a sharp tongue, though she would rather play, dance than use it.

While its images, such as Carl discovering a white sitting dully clothed and hatted in the bath, certainly make their point, *End To End* is a play that has become usefully self-conscious and aware about its own incongruities. It seems to have one foot in the absurdist tradition and one foot somewhere else and could benefit from some editing.

In contrast Daniel Kahane's *Counterspaces* is more like an essay in visual and total poetry. Billed as a multi-media examination of mother daughter love, Kahane sets a performance artist, a live movement artist, a soprano, musician and multi-lingual, multi-directional voice-over to create his effects. It is an intriguing piece if only because the playwright has no faith at all in the adequacy of language or conventional forms to explore the subtleties of his subject.

Kahane's stated concern is with "creating dramatic, functional links between the various members of his cast. The idea was that the artist would become part of a

chamber music style group" and that the members of the paper across her nose would conjure up different perceptions of time.

Well it did, and it didn't. *Counterspaces* treats its audience to such a profusion of sensation it is very difficult to know just when the parts and the whole are intended to be in harmony or in counterpoint.

What is clear is the gulf between what is said, or rather sung and chanted and the vast swirling sub-conscious system which surfaces in its nonverbal under and in the foreign languages. Here the idea that a play must present its audience with characters, a set of social facts and related motivations, is given over to the idea of an ensemble casually moved by forces beyond their control and to which they relate as expressive puppets.

Thus, its dominant theme, the "mother's" death by cancer, becomes a powerful image of mutation and chaos, but it also sets up a stage where the only possible "space" for the cast is one of impotence or reaction that verges on the sentimental. More like an ecosystem, or a psychodrama with specifically therapeutic ends than a play, *Counterspaces* is a sort of orchestrated and chaotic happening: its staple of sound, colour and repetition are definitely of a kind that encourages identification and assent, rather than interpretation.

INTERN

Menopausal farces

By Irving Wardle

Amid the general sound of panic and collapse, 1979 may also be remembered as Britain's year of menopausal farce. As the London audience of Neil Simon's ten-year-old *Last of The Red Hot Love* (Cravenhoe) goes to sleep, this genre cannot be blamed as a recent invention, but the comparison with Mr Simon's saga of a disenchanted New York (ish) restaurateur is decidedly in favour of his current successes.

The success of Roger Hall's *Widow Are Spread* (which I reviewed last January) took everyone by surprise. Of Brian Thompson's *Tobacco* (Wyndham's), I had even higher hopes, during the first thirty minutes when a scientist on the verge of discovering a cure for the common cold after eighteen years' research, sets his work about to be scrapped to make way for a new path.

The deliciously long-awaited collision between the forces of enlightenment and the growing bureaucratic barbarism subsequently undergoes a regrettable dilution as Mr Thompson lingers in the Marina younger generation, the world of power politics, the hero's personal reconstruction of the (a) long-range telephone (radio) set to illustrate the prevailing mood of menopausal life. But the play gives Alan McCowan his best part since the *Goodbye to War!* (and the dialogue is winning. How could any woman resist a lover who asks: "Who was it who joined up every male on your block with a telephone?"

Simon Gray after the failure of his supporting *Woe and Pity* and the summer withdrawal of *Close to the Sun* from the National Theatre repertoire, has joined the menopausal choir with a frankly more appealing thriller *Stage Street* (Aldwych). Rigorously assembled from stage prototypes, this is the tale about the ailing theatrical marriage and the home-loving husband's revenge on the colour-loving lady who tries to boot him out of the house. It also supplies a splendid picture for the aggressively musical talent of Alan Bates (the star of Gray's two most

successful plays) as a stage-manager killer who organizes the blank cartridges, the frothing blood capsules, and the dangling corpse from the flies when his phantasm driver is spurned. The whole plot is most cunningly balanced between an insistence of life and a theatrical game, and for anybody who felt that ineffectual theatrical thrillers had reached their death-stare with Anthony Shaffer's *The Case Of The Girl In the Street*, it goes to show that it is authors who get worn out, not styles.

A female outsider in this company has made the most affecting of the genre as Emma Robson's adaptation of *Dear World, I Say a Letter To My Love* (Aldwych). Set in a beautiful Welsh village, the play concerns a middle-aged widow who has devoted her life to looking after a parafirst teacher, both of them hopelessly sealed from marriage. She plays an advertisement in the local paper and receives a reply. It is from the brother. And so begins an extraordinary exchange of love letters, continued in complete harmony on the brother's side, and in full and understanding by the sister, while their hapless domestic existence continues as usual.

If Miss Robson's development of this wonderful idea does not entirely achieve its heart-breaking potential, the piece remains a thoroughly engaging offering to the ever-widening audience, and I can think of no other recent British play that is more likely to win professional recognition as the Arbuckle classic.

The National Theatre revealed off its last door, just moving to the South Bank with a pair of extremely workmanlike results, that is rather last prize for Robin Lefevre's production of *I # President's Wife* (The Marlow), wherein a single poor (three staffs) couple celebrating their silver wedding anniversary, discover they have never been married at all; it is prolonged to the length of three acts. On the Lyrician stage this was an attack on the hypocrisy of pre-1914 Yorkshire takes on almost the appearance of a classic, thanks to a director who connects economic comic-strip from the psychological plotting, and a company who convince you that these pained proud workers and upper servants are play was written in 1978) have been drawn from life.

It takes some time to get a bearing on Christopher Marlowe's production of *The*

Wild Duck (Olivier) for which Ralph Koltas has supplied a conceptualized photographic setting with man-of-the-chop window (been going on inside it. But once you have adjusted to the desecrated, the old-fashioned virtues of intricately nuanced characterisation predominate particularly in the duet between Stephen Moore's still boyish Hyalmar and Michael Bryant's dourly benevolent Gregers and to mention Ralph Richardson's Old Ekdal, who serves as once as comic survivor of daughter past and a poignant chorus on daughter still to fail. This is also Richardson's greatest performance for years at this rate he will certainly be with us throughout the century.



From *Widow Are Spread* and *I # President's Wife*: Ralph Koltas

NATIONAL



Robert Bader (Alfred Parkers) and Linda
Suzuki (Joseph McElroy) in the National's
"When We Are Married" Photo: John Moore



Anthony Quinn (Anthony) and Michael Douglas (Kingsley) in the National's "Wild Duck"
Photo: John Moore

Imported versus Domestic

By Karl Lavett

The seasonal invasion of imported British plays to New York points up a curious domestic vacuum. American plays concerning pressing moral or political problems are a very rare species with the result that the current consensus for Broadway and Off-Broadway is a British import. Instead the local playwright seems to have rejected political commitment and is perhaps reaching for his answers that provide wider social implications.

The Manhattan Theatre Club's production of *The Jet Set* of *John Smith*, dramatised by David Edgar, admirably demonstrates the imported commodity. As we follow the turbulent impressions of a white South African lawyer, a further misdirected and cavernous lagoon on the disintegrating ideal of apartheid appears. Didacticism rather than drama is at the heart of the play.

Hugh Williams' *Class Warfare*, a staple at London's Royal Court for years, is being given a surprisingly authentic production at The Players Theatre in Greenwich Village. Set in a South London school, the play starts by looking like a British "Blackboard Jungle" but soon takes on metaphorical wrappings as each boy closely delineates yet another possible reason for Britain's social and economic decline. In the shape of two of the boys, the play develops into a struggle between good and evil, order and chaos. The skilful wrong almost hides the fact that this is a moral fable that takes a heavy message.

Ngile and Dan indicates a new departure for Tom Stoppard. With this play he has devoted into the mainstream of drama to emerge as a little-day Shaw. Here we have a new Stoppard combined with a contemporary novel, the role of the press and arguing warlike for both sides. The setting is an imaginary African nation and former British colony where a rebel group has taken over the copper mines and threatens the country.

As the centre of the play is the mine owner's wife and as played by Maggie Smith she is bored, promiscuous and comely charming. It is with this character Stoppard plays his games—she addresses the audience and loves our faces as well as the result that the character outwits the play, particularly in Mr Smith's considerable hands. The character and the play's central issue do not melt, even though in the best Shawian tradition, she is given the crucial final statement:

Incidentally, Paul Hecht plays an Australian reporter in an accent that is completely acceptable here but hardly even strays below the equator. (The second question of domestic actors in imported parts will have to wait.)

Although by a young American playwright, Martin Sherman, the prospect of *Best* on Broadway is almost certainly due to its earlier London success. Mr Sherman has taken on an unlikely and provocative topic: the Man regime's coming up and extermination of homosexuals. In a series of climber, persecuted, victim, sufferer Max and his partner have hidden, fought and put on the Dachau train where Max has witnessed the beating to death of his partner. In *Dachau* Max finds a new lover, Sappho, and eventual salvation in the postscript scene of the second act. Sherman has taken options, not choices—here there are a couple of scenes of blurring the playing. Despite the play's explicitly homosexual theme at once a melodramatic and much fought, work but somewhat Richard III, a queer contradiction for post-revelation status in Manhattan, it is to be commended for taking the controversial role of Max and although the part demands greater variety and detail it is a worthy performance.

Probably the best current example of American social commitment aims didacticism in Michael Weller's *Lower Deck* now ending a healthy run at the uptown Circle in the Square. Weller's *Men of War* is generally regarded as the defining play of the American 1960's, and starts with *Rolling* (1975) and *Lower Deck* a trilogy of regeneration from 1960 to 1980. *Lower Deck* follows a central couple through their turbulent Peace Corps days in the Vietnam War to the harsh commitment that destroys their marriage in 1980 approaches. Mr Weller has a talent for taking the progression of the time plus a very accurate ear. This is a realist play filled with well written scenes and confirms Michael Weller's place as an important American playwright.

A domestic production that truly has a champagne quality is Peter Faiman's *The Geronimo Of Stephen* at the Public Theatre. It is easily without any redacting social value, as it follows as young hero's pursuit of Manhattan romance. With Goethe's *The Sorrows Of Young Werther* as its mentor and heroism it is light, bright and charming in a setting by Stuart Winterel that is itself a witty comment on the action of this sweet comedy.

Imported or domestic? Let's be grateful to have the luxury of choice.



George Wall and Maggie Smith in *Best*



Michael Gora (*Goring*), Dan of Marshall Grant (*Rash*) and Richard Gere (*Marx*) in *Ben*
Photo: James Hamilton



John Shea and Anne De Salvo in *Survivors of Strangers* Photo: Stephen Savage

Special Report: Soviet Theatre

By Kyle Wilson

The richly colorful history of the theater in the Soviet Union must be understood in the difficulties and achievements of the small group of dissidents struggling to drag it from its dreary backwater and debauch into the mainstream of world theater art to be appreciated.

After an effluence of great innovators in the 1920s, free creativity ceased in the 30s. The Stalinist regime wanted a conventional and politically controlled theater which would possess social cohesion by constantly reaffirming the dictatorship of the Communist Party. It divided revolution in form and content alike — for change implies discontent and criticism — and insisted that all theatre productions conform to "Socialist Realism." In accordance with orthodoxy of Maxim Gorkov, all plays had to be keyed into the realist mode and had, moreover, to be overly apparent about the "bright future" of Soviet society.

Production style had to conform to a pseudo-Stalinist system, in which the emotional and mystical elements of that director's symbolist period were suppressed while the naturalistic and dialectic elements of his theories were emphasized. Dissenters and heretics were driven from the new temple. A generation of geniuses became martyrs, including the greatest Soviet director Meyerhold and the greatest dramatist, Mayakovsky. Those who survived the 30's fell prey to a fresh wave of persecution after the war, and by the time Aleksandr Tsvetkov's celebrated *Ramenskoye* went, already long unproduced, was closed in 1948, Soviet theatre was reduced to cringing passivity.

That such a subjugation was considered necessary, and thus despite a certain degree of liberalization in the post-Stalin years the state of freedom continues, indicates the key fact of the relations between the theater and the state in the USSR: the theater is feared. This is an irony, like Australia who, apart from an excessive minority, roughly comprising the majority of *Therapy Australia* simply, don't take theater seriously and may find draconian Society control puzzling.

But the Soviet regime, the arts are part of the media: the theater is perceived as a powerful and potentially pernicious social influence: a disseminator of ideas, a modifier of men's minds and behavior. An art can be both benevolent and malevolent, can either legitimize society's institutions or undermine them. As it is the

nature of free theatre to generate such theatre is must be denied that London. So because the Soviet transgressive mood, and finds our protests at persecution of dissidents and restrictions on creative freedom puzzling and naive, and Soviet theatre since the world's most conservative, innovative and located in new methods, conservative, and originally unorthodox.

On the one hand, it is a measure of unbridled production and style, of interest only to the diner's buccina, and of one classroom in which propagandistic themes, often as heroic as a series of egg productions and the pre-cooked drama of war songs, are given expression in a style called Socialist Realist. Even Australian students, who at some conference of cultural development share the Soviet authors' consciousness of taste, their guidelines for dramatic representation and creation with dignity in the metaphysical world God made, they quantify old-fashioned and crudely done.

Ideological conformity and mass mediocrity are zealously maintained by a hierarchical paper machine, as Stăin holds. He multi-faceted organism of state control of the arts before whose rigid gaze must pass all new plays, new comedies, all appearance plays and all new productions. Direct rehearsal are attended also by Party cultural watchdogs, while their colleagues in the Revolutionary Ministry of Culture are highly sensitive to ideological slanting, misapprehensions or reactions that might question Marxism-Leninism. He recalls the first 'It was in 1946. They were good times' was recently expurgated from a play by the mass impatience of Soviet dramatists (Victor Rozen, for a Russian audience 1978 has been associated with Stăin's purges) and in *Formations*, a dystopian device which explores total ideas, non-ideologically.

the rejection is politically aligned at least one third of all proposals should be of Native play. Australian playwrights may choose their approval of this ecological goal, but it is unfortunately, the Ministry of Culture which makes the selection, for which the chief criterion tends to be a play's conformity to narrow objectives. Typical are the rural works of A. Gribbin, described to me by various dramatists as "sentimental and occasionally idiotic, yet among the most frequently produced because they covered content on work 1967." To factions and the Party bureaucracy are above, inclined to affirm the wisdom of Party policy, and the virtues of the system.

The general picture has become less
unclearly with number in recent years, during

a process of castration and halting differentiation. Stalin's successors realized that his policies had ruined the theatre morally, made poor citizens feel no sense of political responsibility. The vulgar, peasant-like produced plays have been replaced by charged dialogues with a carefully chosen selection of Western writers added, together with previously outlawed Russian, Ukrainian, Moldavian, Belorussian and Georgian. Some of the best European and American dramas have been revived. Moscow, and the likes of Petro Zastav, Rostov, Khabarovsk and Georgia have been partially affected. Soviet cinematography, and especially long a non-person has been rehabilitated. Moscow's two best directors, Ilya Kalmanov and Anatoly Elisei, freely acknowledge their debt to him. A career has developed in the area generally in the USSR, and the theatre of these two directors, the Taganka and the Moscow Malaya Bronnaya Street, are the form of expression and a number of types of the liberal cause.

Both of these would need carefully, so constantly compromise. Else, there have been admitted from other theories for ideological errors, such as emphasizing small elements in Kuchkov's plays, and services, as his theater by alternating the brilliant, inadequately institutional productions of Russian classes with that of the institutional treatment of Soviet contemporary. Russian Soviet plays. Eachman has revived the ideas and practices of Meyerhold and Vakhtangov as well as leaning heavily on Brecht to make a theme of experimental, so painfully torn apart by Soviet standards that theatrical can be replaced only by patriotism among the elite and in terms of the ruling class policy of the regime whereby a small number of intellectuals and contractors are permitted to indulge new dramatic tastes in strictly controlled environment, treating that their creations are acceptable in a first drawn on merit.

June) was theatres are, however, exceptional. Those venerable institutions the Moscow Arts and the Maly are more so. Both are to a degree theatrical museums, centres of established styles, sustained by formidable contingents of singing actors,ponents of innovation. The repertoire of the Arts Theatre includes that of Shostakovich's original production, the oldest of which is Gorki's *The Lower Depths*, dates from 1912 (act!) and a number of others dating from the '30s and '40s. Efforts to revitalize the theatre are being made by Hage Elmroth, one of the younger members of the more liberal circa 1960s who was appointed director for this purpose, but his efforts have been largely frustrated by the entrenched Old Guard.



Free Download ebooks at our [Paperkit Books](http://www.PaperkitBooks.com) [Website](http://www.PaperkitBooks.com) (2017)



Author: Howard Marshall, Director, New JP



The theatrical style: Christopher (The Stranger) at the Moscow Arts Theatre

Despite changes in the repertoire in particular the appearance of plays by modern Western authors which can be interpreted as critiques of capitalist society (Gorbunov's *Lost Ark* by Andrei Arsenov of Tennessee Williams' plays some of Brecht's, some or Lorca's) the list of prohibited works remains long. It includes all the so-called Abominations, all of the British 'New Wave' (Bonds, Scoppard, Storer, O'Brien, Pinter, Wesker et al), Waskiewicz, Mironov, Handke and Arrabal, even Strindberg, who is considered far too gloomy and pessimistic. It is the works of precisely these dramatists which do appeal. However, in two remote corners of the theatrical labyrinth in the Baltic Republics and in the Moscow and Leningrad 'underground' theatres.

The latter are small groups of frustrated and courageous actors and directors who risk persecution and dismissal from their jobs in state theatres by staging prohibited

works in cellars, warehouses, backstage of certain theatres and in private flats, the latter occasionally belong to members of the state intelligentsia.

The repertoire of one group's latest work I managed to see: comprising actors from the Baltic and Turganka theatres included two Pinter plays, *The Dumbwaiter* and *The Caretaker*, Ionesco's *Lea Chances* and *Richard III*, staged in an absurdist manner. Their activities had obviously come to the notice of the KGB who questioned the director about his work, three weeks later he was dismissed from his position as a television producer. Nonetheless the group is currently preparing plays by Beckett and Handke. Another group of young actors from one of Moscow's most sensible theatres is staging a scrupulous adaptation of the Bible, another led by one of Moscow's most talented 'bards', (singer/composer of satirical songs), was preparing Gorbunov's *Faded* in early 1979.

The most intriguing and expressive theatre in the Soviet Union is to be found on the periphery, in particular in the Baltic Republics, where the exigencies of the 'Nationalist Problem' have compelled Moscow to permit a degree of orthodoxy and experimentation unthinkable elsewhere. For the Balts have a largely exotic cultural tradition, closer to those of Poland and Germany than to that of the Slavs, and (frustrated) rebellious to be avoided and the ultimate goal of Russification (imposed conservatism) made. Consequently, one encounters a repertoire bristling with 'Occidentals' and antihumanistic pessimism's such as

Strindberg, Beckett, Alfred Pinter and Wesker. Moreover one encounters an eclectic and avant-garde anti-illusionist production style which has more in common with the work of Meyerhold and Grotowski than with Socialist Realist models.

Moscow informants urged me to see Ibsen's *Brand* directed by Arnold Lerner at the Baltic Theatre in Riga (where this production was shown in Moscow in 1977, the group actually were in the doors of the theatre in their eagerness to obtain tickets). Juoz Turovskis, who works in the Yermolov Theatre in Leningrad, is considered by Moscow representatives of the liberal camp to be the other master of genius. His production of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* combined elements of symbolism and expressionist those with his own brand of formalism. The vital difference is of course, that such productions acknowledge and deal with metaphysical questions, such as non-phenomenal reality and thus openly challenge state ideology.

It is precisely this freedom to question which is denied directors and playwrights in Russia proper, and which is the ultimate goal of all their efforts. Under the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the Soviet Theatre remains far from the reputation it enjoyed in the 1920's. Despite the fact that interest will continue to come in non-Russian theatres, it is probable that no issue will be decided in the great metropolitan centres of Russian culture, where a small group, surrounded by predominantly state theatrical activity, strives for regeneration.

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE

133 Darling Street, Potts Point,
N.S.W. 2011, Australia
Phone: 357-3200.

POPULAR THEATRE ROMAND.

FACHAUER-DE-FONDS (preparing VIII Biennale) to be held in June 1980. The theme will be Theatre Training and will concern the activities of schools and universities in theatre practice which deal with research into forms of expression that are at a Renewal of Popular Theatre. Productions will concern which distribute the topic of Training in an immediately interesting way. Theatre pedagogy will be treated in workshops and discussions as well as productions.

Increased theatre schools and theatre groups which are engaged in trying out original forms of expression are asked to contact IIT in written, or to write direct to

Tracy-Linda Richard, *Théâtre romand*, Boulevard, rue postale 63, CH-1201 La Chaux-de-Fonds, France.

THEATRE OF THE NATIONS. Mr Paolo Grassi confirmed the wish of the Italian IIT Centre to hold the 7th world section of the Theatre des Nations in Rome in 1981. The Netherlands Centre is organising the 8th section in Holland in 1980. The French Centre has offered to host the 10th world-section in 1980 in Great Britain.

NOVENTHENTH IIT CONGRESS. According to the wish of the Spanish Centre of IIT and of the cultural authorities in Spain it has been decided that the 10th IIT Congress is to be held in Madrid in 1982, if possible near the date of the Theatre of the Nations festival initially that year.

OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM. The IIT's Executive Committee has decided to send a telegram of protest to the Czechoslovak authorities on the subject of

the playwrights Jiri Fiala and Pavel Kohout. Václav Havel was recently condemned to 4 years' jail and Pavel Kohout has been jailed.

PUBLICATION. The *London Theatre Scene* (Theatre, Hotels, Dining, Dress, Dancing, Shopping, Sightseeing, Transport) Published 1979 by Frank Cook, edited by Susan Ellis, illustrated by Clive Donnelly, reprinted by Boney Baughman (Marion Price, London) Price 4.50 plus postage. This unique guide to one week's end theatre will be reprinted for anyone planning a visit to London. Details about the services of Theatreland Tours are contained in the first section of the book. They will take you behind the scenes of London's West End theatre and would be happy to provide an extensive discount of 10% on all their services to accredited members of the IIT. Their office is only two minutes' walk from the British IIT Centre 16 St Martin's Court St Martin's Lane London WC2J 7JL Tel 37-745 0975.

DANCE



By William Shatneridge

Anna Karenina

Full-length ballets that are unified are seldom in much the same way, whereas ballets that are divided against themselves are divided in their own way.

The confusions and divisions in Andre Prokofiev's *Anna Karenina* arise not only from the shortfall between intention and achievement but also that between form and means. The format of *Anna Karenina* is ostensibly that of a full-length work, but the resulting mechanism is like three unrelated ballets tenuously strung together.

A lot of the trouble comes from Telyak's need for a cannot really be parceled out — just as *War And Peace* becomes quite ridiculous as an opera. The conventions and artificialsities of ballet are galvanized apart from the social detail that makes up this great novel. But ballet administrators being as parsimonious as they are all around the world, think that the public wants full-length ballets, and the public goes to these full-length ballets for a nice emotional message with musical accompaniment. The actual choreographic enterprise is doomed because these audiences are actually devoid of movement and incapable of seeing.

Choreographers, for some reason, feel that to create a full-length ballet is the pinnacle of achievement, regardless of whether they have the spirit for the form (like Cranko) or not (like Prokofiev). Last year alone we had Valery Panov creating a ballet, version of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and the same choreographer will this year be mounting a ballet based on *War And Peace*. Roland



Marina Bay (L) and Yuri Nemov (R) in the 1975 *Anna Karenina*. Photo: Boris G. Gorbunov



Marchin Akov and Laura Yermolenko as Akov and Vronsky in the 1975 Anna Karenina
Photo: Bruce Gutter

Petal has visited *Pique Dame* for Buzhinskiy and so on. What is it about Russian novels that draw choreographers to them like moths? If this keeps going we'll see a ballet version of *Resurrection*, and then this adaptive stupidity will be complete.

Anyway, *Karevna* is Prokofiev's first attempt at a full-length ballet and his inexperience at handling dramatic structure over an extended period of time is glaringly evident.

Some of my colleagues have gone into print bemoaning the fact that the choreography lacks invention, but here I would disagree, taking it as enrichment: if enrichment the steps are very inventive. Unfortunately they're done for the wrong reasons most of the time, or else done in the wrong place, by the wrong person with the wrong emotional penetration.

The reason why Anna Karenina divides us so quickly from the need to find those dance moments (and) and to the ebb and flow of dramatic momentum within the story, or the shilling-worried emotional stunts and events within the period-and-rusted Tchaikovsky score. Putting it simply, as a member of the Australian Ballet did, Prokofiev cannot produce and he should stick to the successful plotless single-act stuff that he's had a medium of success with in Russia.

The logistics of a full-length ballet are

more complex than and more difficult to those of a plotless (or even plotless) single act work. Such a ballet demands the jelling up of a believable milieu in terms of movement, form and arrangement (for the opening scene of Craske's *Oleg*). It also demands that the main characters be presented almost immediately in recognisable and distinctive form with the music's capacity to grow as human beings as the work progresses.

A full-length ballet needs a strong recurrent fabric of events outside the main characters or the plotline characters so as to anchor the work in actuality (as well as give something for the corps de ballet to do).

Prokofiev's protagonists in his ballet are one-dimensional and the soap opera incidents of love, infatuation, adultery, disillusion and self-immolation are strictly *Rosely's Digest*. The wide social fabric and the majority of off-centred characters in the novel are dispensed with or downgraded to "foiled" adjuncts. It would seem that there is almost no reason to call the ballet. Anna Karenina anyway, so little does the ballet really have to do with the Tolstoy novel and the Russian character of the work is conveyed solely by props, costumes and a smattering of "ethnic" dance in Act 2.

Now I am perfectly well aware that the theme of *Anna* is universal and can apply at any time and in any situation (except for

the social dagger for which would hardly cause a ripple these days). But so many moments in the work are hatched because Prokofiev has not overvalued them into dance conventions, he has taken great pains out of the novel and translated them. You can almost hear him saying, "How can I treat this scene of the character or even the novel?" instead of "Why should I treat this scene, this character or even this novel?"

The feeling of a producer's inability to convey character or encounter equivalent at the very beginning of the work, in the deceptively magnificent scene at the railway station (if it weren't for the programme note, we wouldn't have a clue as to who's getting off the train, who's meeting and who is what. Everybody just wanders vaguely about floundering their axes and salutes for the matrons in the audience). The first actual meeting between Anna and Vronsky is divided into one of those carry "love glances across a crowded room" routines and things don't improve any in the Park scene. Vronsky is misinterpreted and being there, the choreographer decides it is about time they had a duet, and so they do — after much desultory pretensions and recitations. Anna backs off after this one and Vronsky launches into a Singsong dance of unbridled ecstasy. Realism is displaced with and romantic fantasy takes its place.

But Realism pops up again in the next scene set in the country dacha of the Karenins and a few cursory gestures are meant to convey the cold, loveless marriage that Anna is trapped in. The same sort of cursory gestures are meant to convey Dolly's love for Vronsky in the Park scene too, and after a while this logic of ends and means becomes downright absurd, but it digress.

Vronsky has of course died after Anna to the country retreat to claim her. She allows him her company after Karenin has left, and she has done with hugging the child playing with a lion — that little touch courtesy of Ashcroft. A Month is the Countess. He once again promises his love for her, she lets herself melt and they go into another duet, the same rigging with some rather messy, continued and awkward lifts.

The passion of the two lovers, the social background and the domestic troubles all come to a head in the inevitable ball scene. Anna wins a good time and so Karenin stomps off in a rage, the lovers unable to contain their passion one moment longer rush off home throw off their outer garments and to into another extended duet of organic fury and imprudence.

We then get a bridge passage showing as Anna in Vronsky's bed writing Karenin a letter and returning to him her wedding ring.

By night the first act should end there, it is a beautiful and poignant moment: but no, Prokofiev, for some mysterious reason feels he must do all in and mean all in, so we're sent back to the Karenin's house. Anna does some more hugging of the child, Karenin forces her to take back the ring, denoting that he refuses a divorce: thus parts her from the child. Anna is left shivering and staring into the darkness.

It is a very long and drowsy ending. Act 2 is set entirely on the country diacha that presumably belongs to Vronsky, since the usual all-purpose ballet peasants are continuously bowdowing and forebuck-tugging towards her.

The two lovers enter and immediately sink out into the darkness presumably at some stifling vastness (just as the peasant

Shadows).

Anyway at the end of this act the two lovers decide that they should return to the world that they know, since they seem to be dying of boredom out in the country and, having their bags packed in a train, set off hopeful of finding some joy back in St Petersburg.

It makes for another long and drowsy ending.

The beginning of Act 3 is set in the foyer of the Maryinsky Theatre in St Petersburg. Everybody is attending the opera and it makes for a very busy show of stairways and cloak rooms which the corps-de-ballet peepers about it apparently concerned the such national elegance is what ballet is all about. Anna and Vronsky enter and immediately she is out dead while Vronsky

lasts out in Cranko's *Original* but even it is desolate and vague. In fact there is a sameness about all the scenes that the lovers do throughout the ballet. And this is finally what makes the ballet a failure.

Prokofiev has pursued all the subsidiary characters and turned them into spheres in order to concentrate on the central characters, but he fails to make the audience concentrate on them.

They do not grow and expand as characters, but remain as static and one-dimensional at the end as they were at the beginning. The vocabulary of their choreography remains in the same mould: it doesn't blossom in the course of the evening. It is a large and quite inventive vocabulary, but it doesn't create poetry: it doesn't even create its own sense in pure movement terms.

What the actual dance statements that matter in this ballet. It all works on a simple slide rule of impulse and attack and it is this that is meant to carry the delineation of mood and temper. When the lovers are peaceful they dance their steps peacefully: when they are impassioned they dance their steps passionately, but the actual material of the dance movement is not allowed (or is not able) to come forward to convey the people and their emotion. Prokofiev doesn't shift the focus of the dance, he merely turns the volume up and down.

But to get back to the last danced moments of the ballet.

Vronsky dances with Anna, there is escorted back inside by some well important matron. Anna returns to Karenin's house: hugs the child and Vronsky is expelled and banished by her husband and searches the streets in despair. She hears the train coming and throws herself under it.

Which makes for an extremely drowsy ending in the whole evening.

That this is an extremely facile, glib and innocuous reading of the story I know, but so is the ballet. Nothing can prevent the music, heightened and arranged (as the latter ballet quoniam) by Guy Woodliff, nor the excellent white and suggestive designs of Peter Farmer, nor the vast talents of Marjorie Rowe, Marina Samson (who later late in the work was understudy) or Ann Jenner (who was really understudy).

After this year Mr Prokofiev will be creating a ballet on the Dostoev novel *The Three Masked Men*. It is a new idea: there are two versions of it still around, one by the French and one by Flemming. Heads for the Royal Danish Ballet. Neither of them are very successful: I don't want to prejudge, but I feel Prokofiev is going to have to learn a lot more about choreography if he doesn't want his version to join those other two in obscurity.



Michael Scott: David March and Adrian Fenech in the 1970s Anna Karenina. Photo: Robert Harrison

dances at the very opening of that ironic, Russian ballet). The whole of this act is meant to denote the passing of a year and the cooling of the lovers' affair. It is done in allegorical manner with a series of tableaux meant to illustrate the passing of the seasons. Of the lovers we see practically nothing in this act, since they huddle inside the house for the duration.

There is some very high spirited and machine "character" dance bits with full marks to David Borch for putting some zip into his solos. But the lumps-of-muscle of the other equally "ballet disengagement" dance rob the whole act of any flow and impact.

As I said Prokofiev can choreograph well when he doesn't have to contend with emotions and dramatic sequences and he should stick to the field where he is most accomplished: the glorious single act works like his *Les Femmes* and *Jeux d'Enfant*

is well-paced with open areas. This of course is in line with the aesthetic hypocrisy that Tarkovskii illuminated in the novel. But Tarkovskii did it so much better, because he described the vocal reactions to Anna in such detail all Prokofiev can manage is a feeble illustration of it.

He has the men staring wildly ahead as the women flounder behind their fans, in fact so little is the suggestion of social damage that could occur the sick thing wrong was that Anna had a gory stain on her blouse. But the reaction is sufficient for Anna to throw herself about the doctor while everyone has gone (including Vronsky) in a paroxysm of stress and despair.

Vronsky, re-enters, and picks her up, whereupon they go into another extended dance with the vamps, up bits and catches that parodied their first big love parade-dance. It could have been the crowning beauty of the whole affair (much like the

OPERA



By David Gyger

Amalgam of excellence and amateurism

The month under review was an almost non-existent one on the live opera front, with the national company trading off as year with brief seasons in Adelaide and Melbourne before going on holidays and all the regular regional companies in recess till the new year. The only new live productions during December were those presented at the Ipswich Opera Festival in tropical Queensland — an unusual double bill of Von Suppé's *Die weiße Gaidara* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida*, and a production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* which received two performances in Townsville following an equally brief season at the Ipswich Town Hall.

But, as is prone to happen at year's end, the long-awaited ABC television production of Berlin's *Norma* for the Australian Opera took place on the night of Sunday, December 16 — and in it too happened, as it is followed this month by a liberal dose of home-grown electronic opera as ABC radio.

ABC NORMA

Predictably, Sander Segal's production of *Norma* came over a good deal better visually on the box than it had originally on the theatre, as did Freddie Mann's designs, for both their efforts suffered from a tendency to treat the piece rather more as a semi-staged oratorio than fully fledged opera and this serious defect mattered a

good deal less in the confined visual working space of screens than it did in the theatre.

The liberal use of close-ups made it possible for the TV cameras to avoid dwelling very long at all on the full stage picture, which was seldom impressive and very often quite self-defeating, even funny, in the incongruous way it tended to send up admittedly fancy plot and stage action. Likewise, TV viewers were spared the constant full-length view of the highly eccentric costuming in favour of a good many close-ups of the central characters, which helped to understate such limited dramatic impact as can be extracted from the piece — even if it also threw the hideous longhair and even more prominent than it had on stage.

And — most important of all in this area, perhaps — the discourse was presented much more effectively in the television version than it had been on stage. There, the two central lovers had writhed off the stage hand in hand towards a vaguely flickering oddish glow that looked more like the glow of a distant bushfire or a vaguely wacky attempt at a scene as seen through a heavily blurring distorting pane. On TV, they ended the opera draped

in a firm embrace in the centre of a screen at twice-embellished forces flares, and the embrace of the piece continued to burn themselves out during the visual list of credits following the end of the minor proper. It was a much more effective device than that production ever managed in the live theatre context.

All the central characters had at least as much impact, dimensionally, in the video *Norma* as they had in the staged version, and the singing, given the severe limitations of the medium in the reproduction of sound, came across very effectively. As in the theatre, the vocal honours were very much split between Joan Sutherland and her mezzo offider, Margarete Elkins, who sang the important supporting role of Adalgisa. Elkins blended beautifully with her illustrious colleague when required vocally, but was also wholly capable of establishing her own independent character as required. Clifford Groom's Orovoso was also as impressive as it had been in the flesh.

But the Pellicani of Ron Stevens, only possible in the vital vocal area through there were never any quakers about his ability to play the role with telling dramatic effect, came across very much better on TV.



Margarete Elkins & Joan Sutherland in ABC's *Norma*. Photo: Bruce Gilling



Jonas Sutherland as Arius in the ABC production of *Norveg*. Photo: William Morris.

than in the flesh. Early consistently, his basically character tones assumed some impressive lyrical proportions. This was somewhat more than a mere function of the narrower sound system available for TV transmission, though that clearly helped to narrow the basic gap between his voice and those of his colleagues; he seems to have been in particularly good voice for the TV performance, yet another plus for this *Norveg* as seen on television as opposed to the way it came across in the theatre.

All in all, this was one of the rare occasions when the box proved it really did have something positive to offer qualitatively in the area of opera to complement its undeniable capability of taking the art form — or at least a reasonable facsimile thereof — to the mass audience. Which was just as well, for *Norveg* seems to be the only full-length opera we are to be visualised on TV in the foreseeable future. Obviously, there is to be no repetition this summer of the rather more extensive series of video opera we have seen in some recent off-seasons in the television world.

FESTIVAL OF OPERA

Particularly because of this fact, one must hasten to comment with warmth the ABC Festival of Opera to be shared by the two radio networks, AM and FM, this month. Of course, sound is only half the product and it would have been nice if the thirteen operas involved could have been seen nationally as well as heard; but there is no doubt that sound is the more vital half of the product, and of course the costar

getting voiced only to us are considerably less astronomical than those involved in getting both sound and picture to the TV transmitter.

Particularly commendable in this month's ABC effort is that it is much more than a mere celebration of the achievements of one opera company. In particular, it affords national exposure to the work of no less than three of the State companies as well as that of the Australian Opera and the ABC itself in the role of a producer of studio opera. It also includes two contemporary Australian music theatre pieces, one each from the State companies in Melbourne and Adelaide, and it is undeniably dominated by the relatively new and off-beat as the exposure of the standard repertory.

Interesting as it is in itself, however, the ABC Festival is far from an adequate representation of operatic activity in Australia these days. Four of its thirteen performances originated in the studios of the ABC itself and another four with the State Opera of South Australia. Two each came from the Australian Opera and the Victoria State Opera and the thirteenth from the Western Australian Opera Company.

Clearly, the ABC is under-represented in this lineup, though one must hasten to add that practically all of its new productions are being broadcast these days on ABC radio progressively, soon after their premieres. It is a good deal more serious omission that the work of the Queensland Opera Company is not represented at all, particularly since 1979 was a rather marvellous year for that group with most

commendable productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Manon* and *Grévil*, and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. And this at the very last highly debatable whether it was wise to present as a series a group of thirteen operas, only one of which could be expected to be well known to most opera-lovers in this country. There is a very real danger that many opera-lovers will be scared off by the unfamiliarity of the terrain, where they might well have braved the unknown waters had they been more easily initiated among the calmer seas of the more well-known pieces.

The undeniable popular favourite of the ABC Festival of Opera is due to the AM-FM simulcast of the new Australian Opera production of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* on Saturday, February 16, featuring Jonas Sutherland, Richard Grainger and Robert Altman as the major roles and the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra conducted by Richard Beeching. Dates of the other broadcasts in this month's series are Sat 2, *The Secret Marriage* (Carnegie), Tue 3, *Ferni Takti* (Larry Sorkin), Thur 7, *Weather* (Massenet), Sat 9, *The Rape of Lucrezia* (Britten), Tue 12, *Lauretta* (Ruggeri), Thur 14, *The Triumph of Honor* (Scriabin), Tue 19, *One Man Show* (Nicholas Maw), Thur 21, *Le Vais* (Puccini) and *Donner Pours* (Brian Howard), Sat 23, *The Immortal Hour* (Richard Doughton), Tue 26, *The Boy* (Walton), Thur 28, *Over 40* (back).

All the broadcasts commence between 7 M and 8 P.m. The series is a boon for adventurous lovers of the musical theatre, particularly since several of the works



Theresa Edmonds & Maureen Wright in *Canberra Opera's La Belle Helene*

being presented are not available on commercial recordings.

OUT OF TOWN

Each of the three live sub-Australian Opera productions seen during the period under review was a somewhat uneasy amalgam of excellence and amateurism. Sydney's suburban Rockdale Municipal Opera Company concluded an 1979 season with a production of Puccini's *Tosca* which entered very shakily but ended up quite strongly. Kerrie O'Connor sat very well costumed and (I assume both vocally and dramatically) in Act I, developed immensely in Act II and ended up with almost as strong an Act III.

John Mann also failed to convince in Act I, but was excellent after that in the role of the comic hero Christodorus. William Tinsley was a rather too low-key Scarpa, not nearly villainous enough to suit the part.

Canberra Opera ended its year with a rather triumphant production of Offenbach's *La Belle Helene* satirically, which nevertheless failed to draw very well at the box office. John Tasker's Canberra production, based on Kenneth Rowell's designs for the 1977 production of the Victoria State Opera suggested by Ron Barron, caught the spirit of the piece

exactly, and conductor Keith Wilson provided some very stylish playing from his orchestra.

The production was blessed by outstanding performances from Maureen Wright in the title role and Thomas Edmonds as Paris, unequivocally so in the comic interplay department, and almost unequivocally so in the vocal department. Edmonds, of course, is without doubt the best Mozart singer on the Australian circuit and, given the right director — can be an effective actor as well, the only significant flaws in Wright's performance came in the top of her vocal range, where she had some trouble coping with the more intimate collaborative passages in the demanding part of Helene.

The *Belle Helene* also featured a rather not comic turn from Coral Cond as Calchias. Where a fell down, predictably was in the casting of the numerous spectators, perhaps from the ranks of local talent, everyone turned in a workmanlike performance, but most were devoid of the comic flair that is essential to fully satisfying Offenbach spectacles.

DON PASQUALE

The limited festival production of Don Pasquale was also played, like Canberra's *Belle Helene*, by a good deal more than

audience than it deserved, though the main reason for the north Queensland result is a good deal easier to pinpoint: in a remote area where only one major opera production is mounted each year, to witness even a fraction of a step off the dead centre of the well-beaten track of the standard repertory is extremely dangerous.

This year's *Pasquale* was measured as the specific request of the Governor-General, Sir Edwin Cowen, who attended the opening limited performance, and it was produced by bass-baritone Neil Warren-Smith of the Australian Opera, who also sang the title role aptly.

The rest of the principals were nothing to be ashamed of, indeed as a group they would not have been out of place on any stage in Australia except that of the national company itself. But they did not excel in the way that Warren-Smith did, his presence, indeed, no doubt made them seem somehow less adequate than they really were, by contrasting their less complete professionalism with his fully matured operatic artistry.

Norina was played by Lorraine Davison-Greiflich, a very talented soprano from tropical Queensland who has chosen to split her energies between music and domesticity. She sang extremely well and conveyed the essence of Norina's character quite well, but there were times when neither her vocal technique nor her natural dramatic understanding of the role were able to come up with a fully matured performance. There is, simply, I should think, not enough opportunity in northern Queensland for an operatic talent — no matter how promising in itself — to mature fully.

The role of Dr Malatesta was played with thorough competence by Paul Seal of the Queensland Opera Company in Brisbane, but without much in the way of memorable characteristics, and Ernesto, the rather slight romantic lover lead of Don Pasquale's opera, was played extremely well by Glenn Winkley of Sydney who is obviously an up-and-coming opera talent to be watched.

The proceedings were under the ever reliable control of the artistic mastery of the limited festival, conductor John Carr, who brought everything together into a thoroughly satisfying whole, even in the seething atmosphere of the limited Town Hall. A few days later, in the rather marvellous new air-conditioned Townsville Civic Theatre, Carr, his principals and his large and youthful orchestra were obviously much more comfortable, and the performance was several notches further up the ladder toward artistic perfection.

*DAVID GYGER is editor of *Opera Australia*.

EUREKA!

A GOLD COAST OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN A GOLD MINE
SUBSCRIPTION SEASONS OF AUSTRALIAN PLAYS

'Garden Party'

'There Is One Street'

'A Man Of Many Parts'

'Joseph Street, San Antonio'

Ring 381 2405 for a subscription brochure



LIEDER SOUTHERN REGIONAL THEATRE

GOLDSMITH ST. GOULBURN. BOX 488

Resident artistic director John Spicer

Phone (048) 21 5803

At the LIEDER THEATRE.

Feb. 20th to 23rd Feb. 27th to Mar. 1st
TEN LITTLE NIGGERS by AGATHA CHRISTIE

Director JOHN SPICER

April 9th to 12th & 16th to 19th

VERONICA'S ROOM by IRA LEVIN.

Director TED LIGHT.

May 21st to 24th & 28th to 31st

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

New adaptation from JANE AUSTEN'S masterpiece.

Director JOHN SPICER

At the PLAYHOUSE CANBERRA

March 4th to 8th

Lieder S.R.T.'s World Premiere production

of CATHERINE by JILL SHEARER

Director JOHN SPICER

The Lieder S.R.T. receives assistance from the

Theatre Board of the Australia Council

Currency's International Collection



CURRENCY PRESS, the Australian Drama Publisher
TALONBOOKS, Vancouver and Los Angeles
TO PUBLICATIONS, London
PRICE MILBURN, Wellington

50 new plays now available

SELECTED TITLES

np CANADA

- 4 50 The Factory Lab Anthology —
fighting plays from Toronto's
alternative theatre
4 50 JOHN HERBERT, Some Angry
Summer Songs — from author of
Fortune and Men's Eyes
4 50 GEORGE RYGA, The Ecology of
Rita Joe — the classic tragedy of the
urban Indian
4 50 MICHEL TREMBLAY, Forever
Yours, May Lou — Quebec's finest
playwright, especially of women's
roles

NEW ZEALAND

- 1 95 ROGER HALL, Scape of the Play
— a new comedy from author
Flex Time and Middle Age Spread

np U.S.A.

- 4 50 ISRAEL HOROWITZ, Muckert —
an incesto-like satire of family life
7 75 SAM SHEPARD, Banned Child &
other plays — his Pulitzer Prize
work

HUNGARY

- 4 50 JULIUS HAY, Have — a classic
comedy of women's secrets

U.K.

- 4 50 DAVID RUDKIN, Ashes — his
tragedy of childlessness
2 50 ARNOLD WESKER, Love Letters
on Blue Paper — a play of old age
and love

Available only by mail order from Currency Press, 67 Jersey Road, Wollaton N S W 2025.
More plays by these and other authors. Ask for our complete catalogue

BOOKS

The New Barbarism

By John McCullum

Burn the Butterflies by Cliff Green. Currency Press, rrp \$5.95.

Four Scripts by Cliff Green. Hyland House, rrp \$7.95.

Eureka by David Young. Currency Press, rrp \$5.95.

Colonial Experience by Walter Cooper. Currency Press, rrp \$3.95.

The prospect of the new decade holds terrors for many people. For many Australians, panicked for the time being from gross distortions like famine, war or violent social disorders, there is still a growing feeling that Australia is moving towards what Professor E. L. Whitleight calls a new 'barbarism'.

It has been argued in the 'responsible' press that the repressive changes in Queensland are a sign of things to come, rather than simply an aberration led by a comic premier. It has also been argued that the '80s will see a decline into spiritual poverty, as we sit back contented to call all resources overseas, neglect the here and ignore the wellbeing of vast sections of our population.

The most conservative of the resources which will enable this is, of course, uranium, and the most extreme view of the 'barbarism' is that the vested interests who want it will eventually simply invade us and take it, by covert or overt force, bringing to a natural conclusion the story of corruption and intrigue that has marked uranium-mining so far.

This prospect and nuclear politics generally, is the subject of Cliff Green's television play, *Burn The Butterflies*, broadcast at the end of the last decade by the ABC. If the play has a fault, politically and aesthetically, it is that many people claim to have found it frankly incredible. As a political thriller (even if you think it exaggerated) and as a succinct presentation of the uranium debate, it is one of the best television plays for some time and worth taking seriously.

The play shows an Australian 'Social Action Party' Prime Minister for Delaney, who has been elected on an anti-uranium campaign, at a crisis point in his

political life. To pursue a Ross Commons-like dream of social justice and welfare financed by the export of mineral resources, he wants now to lift the ban on the export of uranium, against the vote of Caucus. As he says, they say the best political or fighters are lapsed Catholics or expelled Communists — and I'm both. The ending of the play (and of Delaney's machinations), is startling, but concerning in retrospect — in the best tradition of such thrillers. It is well prepared for melodramatically and formally.

There are two simultaneous subtexts in the play: the 'realist' world of Delaney in his office talking with his colleagues and a documentary about uranium and the current crisis playing continually on a

The ABC TV drama of nuclear politics

BURN THE BUTTERFLIES

Cliff Green



television set in the office. In pre-production one or the other has been accommodated at different moments but while watching it the attempt to follow both together makes for exciting television. The ending brings a neat and satisfying conclusion.

The publication of the script by Currency Press means you can read both scripts. It is also more successful than some of Currency's earlier 'documentary' scripts in that the book becomes a coherent introduction to the uranium issue. There are extracts from pieces by Ernest Titterton and E. L. Whitleight and an intelligent account of the history of the Uranium Monoclonium by Mary Elston. One of Currency's best and most important books.

From Hyland House there are more

plays by Cliff Green. Rather unimaginatively entitled *4 Scripts*, the book contains the television plays, *Shining Morning Face* (broadcast as *The Schoolboy*) and *End Of Summer*, an episode from *Power Without Glory* (No 12, *Disarm Intervention*) and the feature film, *Sansoneffeld*. The publishers seem partly to intend it as a help to prospective script-writers — to see how it is done. It has an introduction by Green, talking about how he came to write each script, and describing the production process. It is a very useful book, from Australia's leading film and television writer.

Currency continues with loose-plays with a TIE script about one of the most over-exposed subjects in Australiana — the Eureka Stockade. It is also a notoriously unsuccessful subject, perhaps because it has no great heroes and is faded (although that should be no great discouragement to Australian nationalists). No one has had the formal administrative to transact these problems. David Young's treatment for children, *Eureka*, uses a lot of audience participation, with the children playing milk-workers and gold-diggers, and building the stockade themselves. It is a lively script and reads as if it would be quite fun.

It is good that Currency is publishing TIE scripts, although it is to be hoped that this one will not be given an artificial weight by being the only one.

Finally, and still from Currency, we have an addition to their National Theatre Series. Walter Cooper's *Colonial Experience*, edited with immense care and attention by the seemingly indefatigable Peter Finn. The play was first performed at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, in 1956 and is a comedy of colonial life, with rapacious businessmen, smooth swindlers, innocent new-chauns, misanthropic heroes and devoted but confused heroines.

Currency has done the theatre here a great service by bringing to light many old plays and their persistence has been justified by the renewed interest in them in Sydney at least. There have been George Whalley's highly successful production of *On Our Selection* (a play which has been about to appear in the National Theatre Series for years) and recently and Richard Wharmen's loving and stirring recreation of *The Sunn South* to open the Sydney Theatre Company.

It remains to be seen whether *Colonial Experience* will be added to what is becoming something of a repertoire of Australian theatrical classics.

THEATRE GUIDE

ACT THEATRE

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP

Children Street Hall. *The Glass Menor* by
Sueo Wilson, director, Warwick Baxter
Last week Feb, first week March 1

CANBERRA REPERTORY (47 4225)
Theatre Three. Joseph Conrad *Gore*
Adapted by David Allen, director, Ken
Boucher. Feb 25 - March 15

FORTUNE THEATRE COMPANY

Playhouse (49 4488)
De by Hugh Leonard. Feb 5
Adapted by David Radkin. Feb 19

CANBERRA THEATRE (49 6211)
Boys Over the Border by Graham Bond and
Jim Barnett, with Graham Bond. Feb
16-25

TEMPO THEATRE
Theatre Three (47 4222)
Oliver! To Feb 9

ANU AND ARTS CENTRE (49 4787)
The Human Vortex, direct company in
residence. Various performances and
workshops. Feb 18 for 2 months

CONCERTS

ANU AND ARTS CENTRE (49 4787)
Recital: P. Thom and C. London. *Get The
Percussion Organ*. Feb 16
CANBERRA THEATRE (49 6211)
David Yates, Feb 4
The Platters, Feb 5

Recital: Makare Haggard baritone, Feb 6
Johnny Mathis in concert, Feb 12
Dave Bonberg folk concert, Feb 25
Cilla Black, Feb 26-27
For more concert info Wilson on
49 3177

NSW THEATRE

ACTORS COMPANY (960 2903)
Closed for renovations
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH
WALES (357 6611)
School Town. The Swedish world of
magic for infants and primary. South
Coast from February 11
Penelope, drama for infants and primary,
Central and Far West from February 11
Wink! With a children's play for infants and
primary, Batavia from February 11
James Joyce reads show for infants
primary and secondary, North Coast and
Hunter from February 11
The Grasses, folk music for infants,
primary and secondary, North West and
Hunter from February 11
COUNT HOUSE HOTEL (499 6305)
Oxford Street, Taylor Square
The Chevalier Ransome Show by Rick
Mason and Malcolm Faraway, director,
Malcolm Faraway, music. Sandra
Ridgwell, with Susan Asquith and Steven
Sacks. Until February 2
Oliver in *De* by Robert and David
Lanchberry, director, Malcolm Faraway,
music, Gary Smith, with Susan Asquith,
Steven Sacks and Karl Jensen
ENSEMBLE THEATRE (928 6873)
Available by David Hare, director, Joe
Faring, with Stephen Brown, Glenn Page

Frank Gallagher, Pamela Gibbons, Paul Mason, Anne E Morgan, John O'Brien and Stanley Walsh. Until February 2
Max Mr. Arrows? by N F Simpson, director, Max Phipps. Commences February 1

FRANK STRAIN'S BULL N'BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 4627)

The 1st A musical review from the turn of the century to today with Neil Brophy, Barbara Wyndon, Garth Meade, Neil Bryant and Helen Loran, director George Carden. Commences and February

GENESIA THEATRE (35 3641)

A Father to Amaze, a review based on the works of Noel Coward, director, Tony Hayes, with Gaynor Macbeth, Charles Zera and Bernadette Hayes. Commences February 2

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 3411)

Eleventh 7 by Paul Foster and Broadway by George Abbott and Philip Dunning with The New York Acting Company. February 2 to 9

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (226 1226)

Programme to be confirmed
KIRRIBILLI PUB THEATRE (92 1413)

The 1944 Show by P P Craveny, director, Richmond Young, music, Adrian Morgan, with Darryl Adcock, Margie McCue, Peter Corbett, Ross Bohman and Laura Gilbert. Throughout February

LES CURRIE PRESENTATIONS (328 5678)

Mix Jackson, traditional bush music for infants, primary and secondary schools

Sydney metropolitan from February 14 to 19

Modern Music Theatre, programme of dissonant music devised by Michael Fretling for infants, primary and secondary Sydney metropolitan from February 4

Colony, a programme of folk songs and sketches describing colonial Australia for infants, primary and secondary with Colin Douglas and Tony Sator. NSW country throughout February

LEADER SOUTHERN REGIONAL THEATRE (088 21 3888)

Gouldern: Ten Little Niggers by Agatha Christie, director, John Spurr. Feb 20-25

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (088 2166)

Closed for renovations

MUSIC BOX THEATRE (82 2176)

Seymour Centre Downstairs

A musical by Ken Moffat and Terry O'Connell, director, Terry O'Connell, with Tony Sheldon, Valerie Hadzi, Tony Prentice, Bob Barnes, Graham Lowman and Maureen Egan. February 13-21

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (069 8222)

Show unconfirmed. Contact theatre for details

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (977 6584)

Box Around by John McKellar and Ron Fraser, director, Bill Orr, with Ron Fraser. Until February 16. New show commences February 18

NEW THEATRE (318 3401)

AM M by Arthur Miller, director, Paul Quinn, with Valda Diamond, Rob Thomas, Antonette Blackland and Michael Penstone. Throughout February

NIMROD THEATRE (089 3025)

Upstairs, Mr. B's Room by Thomas Keneally, director, Ken Warler. Commences February 6

Domestics Barlowe, a Sideshow Company presentation. Until February 3

Travellers by Steven Swett, director, Neil Arnold. Commences February 28

NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAD (357 1280)

The "Ghst" Journey for primary schools and *Armses Spool*, *Leader Than Words* for secondary schools, both directed by Ian Watson, with Nola Collins, David London, Colin Allen, Bryan Jones and Rosemary Leato. Metropolitan area throughout February

PLAYERS THEATRE COMPANY (30 7211)

Songs Mr. Mosher Doh's Track Me, director, Peter Rury, with Lu Harn and Karen Johnson. Throughout February

269 PLAYHOUSE (929 6646)

These Fabulous Years (191-200) created and devised by John Hewitt, based upon one of the original 60 minor shows, director, John Hewitt, with John Hewitt, Louise Hewitt, Bill Young, Jane Hamilton, Doug McGrath, Peter Parkinson and Jenni Ogle. Throughout February

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY (089 25 3831)

Contact theatre for details

THE ROCKS PLAYERS (060 6254 6315)

Orion Hotel The Rocks

The End of the Dark Show by Slater Smith, director, Anthony Barclay, with Ben Franklin, David Whancy, Garryn Moss and Garryn Linn. Until February 13

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (988 1948)

Five drama workshops on weekends during term and during week on school holidays, includes playbuilding, mime, dance, sculpture, puppetry, drama, radio and video. *Childhood* and *The Tale* film competitions February 2. The Shopfront

Caravan touring country towns

SPEAKEASY THEATRE RESTAURANT (062 7421)

The 1st Show produced and directed by Alan Lane. Commences February 7

STUDY THEATRE COMPANY (2 6588)

The Secret South by George Carroll, director, Richard Wharton, with John

Hargreaves, John Frawley, Peter Carroll, George Spurr, Robin Rums, Ron Falk and John Gaden. Until February 12

Close of Plot by Simon Gray, director, Rodney Fisher, with Ruth Cracknell and Frank Thring. Commences February 21

THEATRE ROYAL (231 6811)

Travelling North by David Williamson, director, John Bell, with Carol Kaye, Frank Wilson, Jennifer Hagen, John Hamilton, Anthony Ingwers, Deborah Kennedy, Graham Knave and Helen Sings. Until February 2

An Abominable Funn, *Drawing with Spike Milligan* and *Friends with Spike Milligan*, Mike Milligan and Carl Vine. February 11 to 23

FIRST STAGE THEATRE COMPANY (82 1803)

The History of Theatre in Drama, Form by Gary Baxter, director, Chae Lew, with Angela Bente, Darren Corrigan and Gary Baxter. Touring to schools throughout February

OPERA

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA (2 0288)

Sydney Opera House

The Magic Flute by Mozart, conducted by Richard Bonynge and produced by John Copley. *Salvatore* by Verdi, conducted by Geoffrey Arnold and produced by Tom

Longwood. *Lovers & Lamentations* by Donizetti, conducted by Richard Bonynge and produced by John Copley. *Parvaneh* by Gilbert and Sullivan, conducted by Geoffrey Arnold and produced by John Cox. Throughout February

CONCERTS

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 3411)

Peter Allen commences February 15

ROBERT THEATRE (661 6967)

Johnny Mathis from February 9 to 12

Vera Lynn from February 14 to 18

For more contact Carole Long on 357 1360

QLD

For more contact Carole Long on 357 1360

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

QLD

THEATRE

ARTS THEATRE (36 2344)

The Murder Game by Constantine Cos, director, Jason Savage. Continues to February 9

Hugin: Fench by Giles Cooper, director, Dorothy Beckford. 14 Feb - 22 March
HER MAJESTY'S (321 2777)

New York Accent Co. Programme to be announced February 11-25
LA BOITE (36 1623)

Sings by Edward Bond, director, John Mison (jointing the TN Company) February 1-23

TN COMPANY

Twelfth Night Theatre (52 7843)

The ThreePence Opera by Bristol Becht and Kurt Wolf, director, John Mison, members of the Queensland Youth Orchestra, conductor, Greg Turner. With Geoff Cartwright and Sally McKenna. Feb 22 - March 13

OPERA

QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY

SOHO Theatre (231 5177)

Mari Stuart by Desautels, director, John Thompson, designer, Mike Bridges, the Queensland Theatre Orchestra conductor Graeme Young, with Henry Howell (by arrangement with the English National Opera) Phyllis Bell, Margaret Russell, Paul Neal, Dennis White, Sally Robertson. Feb 19, 20, 21, 28 March 1

For entries contact Don Bartholomew on 336 8111

SA THEATRE

FESTIVAL THEATRE (223 8610)

Annie. Director, George Martin, with Jill Perryman and Haydn Gordon. Feb 8-16
PLAYHOUSE (31 5131)

Find The Lark by Michael Perrone, director, Ted Craig, designer, Shaun Gannon, with Mollie Sugden. Feb 1-23

THE SPACE (31 0131)

Am I Over My Head by Graham Bond and Jon Barrett, with Graham Bond. To February 9

Trouse! Meet by David Allen. Feb 14 - March 1

CONCERTS

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL

ABC From Concert with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, conductor, D Mounham, soloist, Dean Olsen. Feb 16
Brins May with soloist Brian Porter (vocalist). Programme of music from TV and film. Feb 20

Concert of Dvorak and Elgar, conductor, Patrick Thomas, soloist, Deborah Patton. Feb 21

For entries contact Edna Reid on 223 8638

TAS THEATRE

POLYGON THEATRE (34 6018)

The Golden Posidonius. Arrived by John Hardin and John Butters, director. Don Gay Music Lecturer Theatre, University of Tasmania. Feb 8-16

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams. In rehearsal

TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE

(23 3996)

No performance until March except *The Saga of Pash and Josh*, director, Peter Wilson. Sat mornings. Salamanca Market

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6266)

The Hunchback, produced by the Rada Organisation. Feb 12-16

La Chape of Spain. *Mari St Mervyn*, director, Joan Mison. From the Adelaide Festival. Feb 26-29

For entries contact the editorial office on (085) 67 4470

VIC THEATRE

ACTORS THEATRE (429 1680)
Children's theatre production. Sat afternoons

ARUNA THEATRE (24 9887)

Schools Team, Junior secondary
The White The Biggest Thing That ever Died by Ken Kesey and the Salamanca Company Theatre

Senior secondary
The Annals of by Peter Skafar. Children's, Youth and Women's theatre classes

ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

(329 4355)

Firsttime country tour. Feb 28-March 14
Carbons (at the Peam Factory) in association with John Timlin. by John Ronald, Director, Bill Hannan, Music by George Dryfus

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING

GROUP (347 7133)

A Season of Carbons. A play about Tunka by John Ronald. Starring Bruce Spence
CATCH A RISING STAR (428 2623)

New series where youngsters display their talents. Wed - Sat. MC. Ron Challinor

COMEDY CAFE (419 2669)

With Rod Quantock, Mary Kennedy and so. Original comedy entertainment

COMEDY THEATRE (663 4993)

Programme set available

CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE

(877 4056, 870 6742)

Community based, learning to schools, libraries, community centres and festivals
Term 1, 1989

Who? What? When and Where?

Angie Jambou

It's Only a Bit of Green Glass

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (41 3721)

They? A Crowd with Doug Tremlett and Rob Melhorn. To March 10. A sleight of hand magic show with a difference

HOOPLA THEATRE FOUNDATION

(63 4588)

Playbox Downstairs

Quintrophobia by Ted Nelson. World Premier. Director, Charles Tingwell, daughter, Tracy Watt. From 4 Feb

Playbox Upstairs

Indigoreen by Barry Collier, director, William Smith, starring Malcolm Robertson. From 24 Jan

Annabelle Myer by Roger Putnam. World Premier, Director, Malcolm Robertson. From 28 Feb

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

(667 3211)

Spies of Am, starring Reg Livermore, director, Peter Roney, with the Wellington Bowls Band

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

RESTAURANT (419 6226)

The Hunch Show. Upstairs (above) regularly changing show

LA MAMA

Programme not available
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
(054 4880)

Russell 51 Theatre Directed by Harold Prince: director, John Samson, with Elizabeth Alexander, Neil Patrick Harris, Edward Hopper and John Stanton.

Antichamber Theatre: *Concharella*, director, Frank Hauser. To 2 Feb
Arborea's Choice by Harold Hughes, director Frank Hauser starting June Aug as *Magpie*. From 1 Feb

Antichamber 2: The Just Dars of Althe Series adapted by David Edgar, director, Judith Alexander. From 1 Feb
OLD MILL (052 21 1444)

Drama centre of Ozdian University
Regular evening performances
PIU GRIM PUPPET THEATRE
(018 6688)

Circus Strings and Things: Director, Bert Cooper. Mon - Fri. Mon and 1pm, Sat 2pm

POLYGOOT PUPPETS (018 1512)
Multi-cultural puppet theatre touring schools and community centres

TICKI AND JOHNS THEATRE
RESTAURANT (062 1754)

The Comedian starring Ray Gonnas, Judith Roberts, Marlene Fields, Val Jellay and co

New show starring John and Ticki late Feb

UNIVERSAL THEATRE (019 3777)

Regularly changing repertoire of plays, concerts and dance programmes
MAJOR AMATEUR COMPANIES
Adelaide Players 63 3688

Bays Theatre Group 762 1082

Clayton Theatre Group 578 1702

Hendberg Rep 48 2262

Melborn Theatre Company 211 0028

Pumpkin Theatre Company 42 8257

Williamstown Little Theatre Company

526 4267

1812 Theatre 196 5624

OPERA

PRINCESS THEATRE (062 2511)

Coastal Op. Victorian State Opera

For further details see *Canberra* on 781 7777

WA

THEATRE

ODOLPHIN THEATRE

Take Me To Your Leader with Richard Sjolow. 23 Feb - 4 March

Northern Drift (Australian Premiere)
Presented by Merry Livings and Alex Glasgow. 23 Feb - 15 March

HAYMAN THEATRE, WAIT (330 7024)
Cop Out by Cliff Green, Director, Robert Faggetter. 28 Feb - 15 March

HOLE IN THE WALL (351 2403)

Room In Our Season by Doreen Clarke, Director, Edgar Metcalfe. 27 Feb - 15 Mar

A Man Has Many Parts by Jack Hibbard
World Premiere. Director, Ray Gosselin. From Feb 28 at 10.45pm

OCTAGON THEATRE

Elizabeth I by Paul Fozar. Acting Company of New York. 26 Feb - 5 March

PLAYHOUSE THEATRE (325 3999)

National Theatre Company

Private On Parade by Peter Nichols, Director, Stephen Barry, designer, Tony Trap. From 22 Feb

PERTH CONCERT HALL (325 3994)

An Evening with Jasper Carrott. 25 Feb

REGAL THEATRE (381 1337)

An Afternoon Party Evening with Spike Milligan and Friends. *Make Me Cry* and *Carl Fox*. 27 Feb - 15 March

DANCE

FORREST PLACE

WA Ballet Company

Cadaver's Wedding Choreography
Clara Parrott

Corpus Grass Choreography Charles Cady. 28 Feb

PERTH ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE
Bedroom Queen Paganini. 25 Feb

CONCERTS

For details and bookings for Festival of Perth concerts, contact **Festival Box Office**, Perth Concert Hall (325 3994)

Includes concerts by

WA Symphony Orchestra

Lana Marie Trio (Brazil)

Stan Getz Quintet (USA)

Netherlands Wind Ensemble

Aravely Trio

For further contact *Joan Anderson* on 299 6819

J.C.

WILLIAMSON THEATRES LIMITED

THEATRICAL SERVICES

MUSICALS FOR AMATEURS AND SCHOOLS

Choose from a wide selection of old favourites and recent successes including 'Man of La Mancha', 'A Little Night Music', 'Brigadoon', 'The Desert Song', 'The Sentimental Bloke' and many others, including 'Vamp' — the new vampire musical which can be performed with a small rock group, also the pantomimes 'Dick Whittington', 'Cinderella' and 'Puss in Boots'.

Enquiries to Mr John Bryson
Comedy Theatre,
Exhibition Street, Melbourne
Phone 663-3211

COSTUME HIRE

A large range of period and fancy costumes is available for hire to cover all musicals and plays.

Contact Mrs Gwen Ruffledge
JCW Hire Dept. Cohen Place
(Rear Her Majesty's Theatre)
Melbourne. Phone 663 2406

THEATRICAL PROPS AND FURNITURE

Props, furniture and cloths available for hire for the stage, film, publicity etc.

Enquiries to Mr Stan Davies
Her Majesty's Theatre
Exhibition Street, Melbourne
Phone 663 3211



**YOU
NEED
OPERA AUSTRALIA
ALL THE
NATIONAL NEWS
INTERVIEWS WITH VISITING
PERSONALITIES
BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON
BOTH NATIONAL AND
REGIONAL COMPANY
PRODUCTIONS.
THE COMPREHENSIVE
MONTHLY
OPERA NEWSPAPER
SUBSCRIBE NOW
ONLY \$5 ANNUALLY**

To:
Subscription Manager
Opera Australia
P.O. Box 8081
Rays Exchange NSW 2112.
I enclose my cheque for \$5
Please send the new *Opera Australia*

Name

Address

Postcode

Theatre Australia



COMING SOON

Christopher Hunt on the
Adelaide Festival.

Jim Spinks on the result of mixing
Patrick Cooke, Richard Bradshaw
and Robyn Archer and
shaking well...

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Australia:

\$21.00 Post Free for twelve issues

Give a gift subscription — and SAVE!

\$36.00 for two subscription

\$21.00 for overseas rates

Overseas:

Surface mail A\$30.00

Airfreight A\$15.00

By air

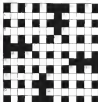
New Zealand, New Guinea A\$30.00

U.K., U.S.A., Europe A\$15.00

All other countries A\$30.00

Add \$12.00 for contributions to air mail rates

Cheque drafts in Australian currency should be
forwarded to Theatre Publications Ltd., 10
Elizabeth Street, Mayfield, N.S.W. 1504,
Australia



THESPIAN'S PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 10

Name

Address

Across

1. Classic shows a respondent (7)
2. Taxi to home in this bus (4)
3. Inventory insect (7)
4. Chemical formulae for the East gives impetuous
glance (10)

5. Hand the after-dinner drinks, they're useful
when travelling (9)
6. A farce about a Prince Henry's old flowers (9)
7. Policemen in the South East has branch (11)
8. Worker holds in after a refusal to apply
permission (7)
9. Sold at the house in which the banquet is (11)
10. Dressed formally the shop, it's where you live (7)

Down:

1. Red hero has two poems in South Sea
garland (5)
2. "But _____ your message to the stocking
poet and we'll see that"
(Madeline) (5)
3. Spine joins spiritual partners (9)
4. Local devil takes a ride (7)
5. Chemical compound as wage for unscout
bears (7)
6. Small a pool in confusion on the sea-dragon (9)
7. Spout the endless water for many months (7)
8. Scape goat with distasteful stained moors (7)
9. To have someone to do one's work (10)
10. Van is empty, but someone's figure (10)

Last month's answers

The first correct entry
drawn on February 24th
will receive our year's
first subscription to *PA*.
The winner of last
month's Crossword was
Ms. V. Masters of
Beverly Hills.

